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CHESTER

A HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CITY

'WHERE DEVA SPREADS HER WIZARD STREAM'

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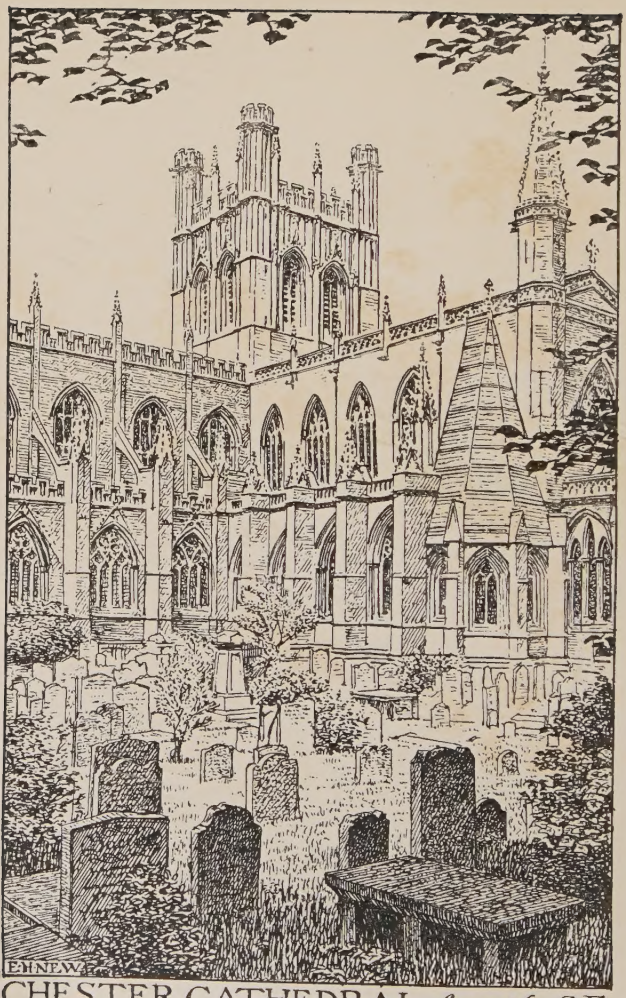

CHESTER CATHEDRAL *from the* S·E·

CHESTER

A HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CITY

WRITTEN BY
BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE
ILLUSTRATED BY
EDMUND H. NEW

LONDON
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1903

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHESTER	3
II.	THE SAXON AND NORMAN PERIODS	27
III.	CHESTER UNDER LATER SOVEREIGNS	49
IV.	THE WALLS—THE BRIDGE AND MILLS	71
V.	THE CASTLE	101
VI.	THE ABBEY OF ST. WERBURGH	121
VII.	THE ANCIENT AND MODERN SEES OF CHESTER	139
VIII.	CHESTER CATHEDRAL	153
IX.	OTHER RELIGIOUS HOUSES AND CHURCHES	179
X.	MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS	203
XI.	AMUSEMENTS AND CUSTOMS — THE ROWS — ANCIENT HOUSES — THE PORT OF CHESTER	225
XII.	SOME DISTINGUISHED CESTRIANS AND VISITORS TO THE CITY	253
	APPENDIX—ITINERARY	275
	INDEX	281

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FULL PAGE

PAGE

1. Chester Cathedral from the Walls (S.E.) *Frontispiece*
2. Roman Tombstone in the Museum 2
   From a photograph by Mr. R. Newstead, by kind permission.
3. Bridge Street 26
4. Chester Cathedral from the N.E. . . . 48
5. Old Bridge and St. Mary's without the Walls, from the Walls 70
6. Chester Cathedral, Pulpit in the Refectory . 120
7. Bishop Lloyd's House 138
   From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.
8. The Stalls, Chester Cathedral 152
   From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.
9. St. John's Church, Interior 178
10. Eastgate Street 202
11. God's Providence House 224
    From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.
12. The Bear and Billet Inn 252
    From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.

MAPS

Plan of Chester Castle 100

Plan of Chester . . . . . *At End*

SMALLER ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

1. Roman Altar in the Museum 17
2. Roman Antefix, with Badge and Standard of Twentieth Legion, in the Museum . . . 19
3. Roman Carving on Rock by Edgar's Cave . . 23
4. Anchorite's Cell 32
5. Pemberton's Parlour 58
6. Phœnix Tower 61
7. Morgan's Mount 82
8. The Water Tower from Bonewaldesthorne's Tower 85
9. The Old Bridge at High Tide 92
10. The Wishing Steps and St. John's Church . . 95
11. Cæsar's Tower and Bridge Gate 107
12. Grosvenor Bridge and Castle 114
13. Wrought-iron Work in Cathedral 162
14. Miserere in Cathedral 170
    From a photograph by Mr. T. Cann Hughes, by kind permission.
15. Norman Chamber by Cloisters 175
    From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.
16. Wooden Coffin in the Ruins of St. John's Church . 191
17. In the S. Row, Watergate Street 235
    From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate.
18. Stanley Palace 245
19. Yacht Inn 269
20. New Gate 276

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAP.			PAGE
I.	*Initial.*	Chester and the River *From an old engraving.*	3
	Tailpiece.	The Old North Gate *From the drawing in Canon Morris's 'Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns,' by kind permission of the author.*	25
II.	*Initial.*	The Water Tower in the Olden Time	27
	Tailpiece.	The Old Water Gate *From Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	47
III.	*Initial.*	The Old Ship Gate *From Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	49
	Tailpiece.	Carved Wood Boss in the Roof of St. Mary's Church *From a photograph by Mr. R. Newstead, by kind permission.*	69
IV.	*Initial.*	The Old Bridge Gate and Tower *From Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	71
	Tailpiece.	The Old Bridge, etc. *From Cuitt's etching.*	98
V.	*Initial.*	The Old Castle Gate and Great Shire Hall *From Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	101
	Tailpiece.	Stone Boss in the Cathedral Cloisters *From a photograph by Mr. R. Newstead, by kind permission.*	119
VI.	*Initial.*	The Old East Gate *From Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	121
	Tailpiece.	Abbey Gateway	137

CHAP.			PAGE
VII.	*Initial.*	Old Bridge Street . . . . . *From Cuitt's etching.*	139
	Tailpiece.	Carved Wood Boss in the Roof of St. Mary's Church . . . . . *From a photograph by Mr. R. Newstead, by kind permission.*	151
VIII.	*Initial.*	The Cathedral from the N.E. before restoration . . . . . *From an old engraving.*	153
	Tailpiece.	Carved Figure in Cathedral Choir .	177
IX.	*Initial.*	The Old Tower of St. John's Church . *From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate*	179
	Tailpiece.	Saxon Crosses at St. John's Church . *From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate*	200
X.	*Initial.*	The Pentice. . . . . *From the old Pictures in Canon Morris's 'Chester, etc.'*	203
	Tailpiece.	The Castle from the Bridge in 1901 .	223
XI.	*Initial.*	The Rows in Watergate Street . .	225
	Tailpiece.	The Crypt in Watergate Street . . *By kind permission of Messrs. Quellyn, Roberts and Co.*	250
XII.	*Initial.*	God's Providence House before Reconstruction . . . . . *From a photograph by Messrs. Frith and Co., Ltd., Reigate*	253
	Tailpiece.	View up the River from the Mills .	274

NOTE

THANKS are due to the Rev. Canon Morris for kindly allowing the Artist to make use of the engravings, chiefly from contemporary sources, in his work, *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*; and to the Rev. J. M. New of the Cathedral, and Mr. Robert Newstead of the Grosvenor Museum, for their generous assistance.

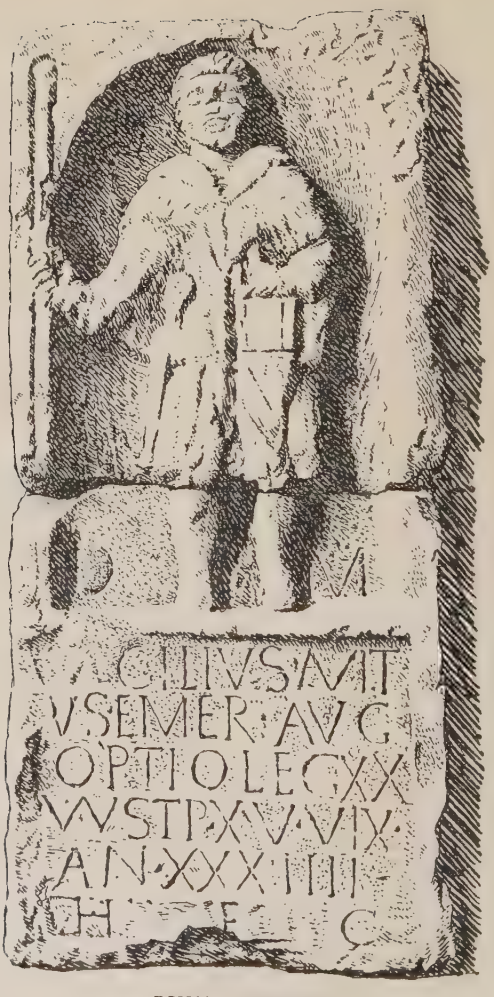
PREFACE

The desire of the writer in compiling this book has been to link incident and place as closely as possible one with the other. Hence the descriptions of the various objects of antiquarian interest, in which Chester is so rich, are given in connection with that part of the history of the city to which they seem most closely to belong, and not in their topographical relationship to one another. Such a plan, it might be urged, has the disadvantage of rendering the book less convenient for use as a guide by strangers. It is hoped that their needs will be met by the Itinerary at the end, wherein will be found full instructions for making a journey around and through the city, with references to the pages containing information on the several objects of interest encountered on the way. In the preparation of this book, many works have been referred to and quoted from. 'I deliver,' as Churchyard pleaded, 'but what I have seene and read: alledging for defence both auncient authors, and good tryall of all that is written.' Canon Morris's *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*, and the late Mr. Hughes's *Cheshire Sheaf*, have been so peculiarly valuable to me that it would be ingratitude not to make special mention of them. To Mr. Newstead, Curator of the

Grosvenor Museum, and the Rev. J. M. New, M.A., I owe much for their kind help; and with their names I must not omit to mention that of my friend Mr. E. H. New, who for his charming illustrations, and for the many hints which he has given me, has placed me, not for the first time, deeply in his debt.

B. C. A. WINDLE

WEATHERBURY, HARBORNE,
May 1903



ROMAN TOMBSTONE

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHESTER

OLD VIEW OF CHESTER

LIKE many of her sister cities in this land, Chester presents no certain evidence as to who were her first builders; appears, indeed, shrouded in the web of legend which older writers have woven around her early history. Webb, writing in 1621, says: 'The first name that I find this city to have been supposed to have borne was Neomagus; and this they derive from Magus, the son of Samothes, who was the first planter of inhabitants in this isle, after Noah's flood, which now containeth England, Scotland, and Wales; and of him was called Samothes, and this Samothes was son to Japhet, the third son of Noah; and of this Magus, who first built a city even in this place or near unto it, as it is supposed, the same was

called Neomagus. This conjecture I find observed out the learned knight, Sir Thomas Elliott, who saith directly, that Neomagus stood where Chester now standeth.' Other ancient retailers of the marvellous have ascribed its original construction to the hands of giants—

> 'The founder of this city, as saith Polychronicon,
> Was Leon Gawer, a mighty strong giant.'

'But,' says Camden, 'the very name may serve to confute such plebeian antiquaries as would derive it from Lean Var, a giant, seeing Lean Var, in the British language, signifieth nothing else but the great legion.' Here we begin to come nearer to the truth, so far as we now know it; for whatever may have been the actual origin of the city which to-day is called Chester, whoever they were who first occupied this site and made it their home, it is to the period when Rome was mistress of this island that we have to look if we are to discover the earliest verifiable facts respecting the city by the wizard stream of Dee. Its position is such as to make it the key to an important district, for occupying a commanding position, as it does, on the plain between the Dee and the Mersey, it lies between the two natural fastnesses of a defeated and flying enemy—the mountains of Wales, and the hills of the north-west and of Yorkshire. And so we find in later history that one of the two decisive conflicts which destroyed the British sphere of influence in the island was that fought at Chester, which cut off the Celts of Strathclyde from those of Wales and the south-west.

Here, then, on the cliff of red sandstone which overhangs the river—and at that time the waters which lapped its foot were those of a broad estuary—

the Romans constructed a fortress to watch over this portion of their dominions and to keep ward over the fierce natives who had found a hiding-place in the neighbouring hills. From the name of the river on which it was situated it was called Deva, and from its peculiarly military nature Castra Legionum, 'a name,' says the late Bishop Creighton, 'which it still retains *par excellence*. For though many places in England bear the marks of their origin as sites of Roman garrisons in the termination *chester* or *caster*, the Camp on the Dee bears only the name of Chester, as though it were so clearly the chief station of the Roman army that no other could equal it in importance.' According to their origin, ecclesiastical, military, or otherwise, towns may be arranged into groups, as Mr. Freeman has shown in his *History of Exeter*; and amongst his first group, that is, towns of Roman origin which have throughout all English history kept a certain position as heads of shires, heads of dioceses, or in some way places of importance, Chester must always occupy an honourable position. Although it would be going too far to claim for Chester the place of honour amongst the military centres of the Roman period, there can be no doubt that it occupied a very important position amongst them, and, as Mr. Haverfield has recently shown, was remarkable in that, unlike almost all Roman towns in this country and elsewhere, it was purely and entirely a military station. 'Deva,' he says, 'was from first to last a fortress, always garrisoned by troops, always devoid of organised civic life and municipal institutions, but differing from some other fortresses by the fact that its garrison consisted of legionary and not of auxiliary troops.'

The garrison towns of Roman Britain were origi-

nally constructed as independent fortresses, not that they were occupied solely and entirely by fighting men, for of course there would also have been the wives and children of the soldiers, camp-followers, and others, but that they were intended primarily for military purposes, like the Aldershot of our own day. But in many, indeed, in most cases, a non-military population soon grew up around this military nucleus; suburbs occupied by traders and others became attached to the town; in fact, a 'bazaar' was formed. Thus gradually the town became of importance for other than military reasons, obtained a constitution—a charter as we should now call it—secured the right of self-government, and became a *colonia* or *municipium*. Such was the case at York, which, though it was the seat of the third of the British legions, did become a town with a regular municipal constitution. There is no trace of anything of this kind having ever happened at Chester. Suburbs it had, for they have been traced along the Boughton road outside the east gate of the city; but Chester never grew into a town. A purely military station it was at its origin, and a purely military station it remained. There is no evidence even that it advanced to that kind of intermediate position occupied by towns which never arrived at full municipal honours. Such towns appear as the possessors of a certain body of Roman traders (*cives Romani consistentes in* ——), a kind of quasi-civic element, not rising to the dignity of a constitution. Chester presents no evidence of trade, though no doubt it must have been in some way connected with the lead-mines in Flint, and perhaps some of the pigs of that metal may have found their way into the city. Indeed, it seems likely that a pig of lead, with the name of Vespasian imprinted on it, which was found

on the Roodeye, then the floor of the estuary, may have been dropped from some ship which was being unloaded of its cargo by the Chester quay. If this be so, the lead may have been brought there purely for the purposes of the garrison, or perhaps more probably in payment of taxes; at any rate, there is no evidence of the existence of any traders, or at least of any organised trading body. Deva most nearly resembles that other great military centre, which guarded the southern parts of Wales, Caerleon-on-Usk, the Isca Silurum of the Roman period. This again was never a *colonia*; indeed, Mr. Haverfield considers that it was so purely military in its nature, that he is unwilling to allow that the bishop who was at the Council of Arles, and has always been supposed to have had his see at Caerleon, was really connected with that spot, preferring to assign Lincoln as the place of his episcopal chair. The fortresses which guarded the Roman Wall, that great work of military engineering, have much in common with Chester. They also were purely military in their conception, and remained purely military to the end. These, however, were garrisoned by auxiliary troops and not by legions, and in this respect, as will be seen shortly, they differed from the city on the Dee. Deva, then, was a somewhat unusual kind of town, of a class uncommon not merely in Britain, but in other parts of the vast Roman Empire. 'If,' says Mr. Haverfield, from whose writings is to be learnt much that is now known about Roman Chester, 'if we carry the comparison across the Channel we shall find very few parallels to Chester. On the continent the legionary fortresses nearly always became *coloniæ*: they resemble York, not Chester or Caerleon, and this is significant of Roman Britain. The province was one

which, above all others, was purely a military province. It was in reality a military frontier, with little share in the civil life of the empire. Chester and Caerleon are characteristic features of a distant borderland.' It has just been pointed out that Deva was garrisoned by legionaries, and not by auxiliary forces. A legion was composed of from four to six thousand men. These were mostly Roman citizens; they were better paid, they fulfilled a longer term of service, and they had a larger bounty on retiring. They were almost wholly infantry. The auxiliaries, on the contrary, in regiments five hundred to a thousand strong, were either infantry or cavalry, and were mainly recruited from provincials who did not enjoy the Roman franchise. Of this latter class of soldier there were few or none at Chester, so far as the existent records allow us to judge. It seems probable that it was occupied as a fortress about the latter end of the reign of Claudius, A.D. 50-54, and was no doubt in existence when Suetonius commenced his campaign against Anglesea—that is, in A.D. 61. Some ten or fifteen years later we find it occupied by the Legio II., Adiutrix. After that legion left the island, its place at Deva was taken by the Legio XX., Valeria Victrix, the latter words being its sub-title or second name; for many of the legions possessed a second name, just as some of our regiments are known as 'The Black Watch,' or 'The Connaught Rangers,' as well as by their official or numerical title. It is possible that both the second and twentieth legions may have occupied Deva together for a time; at any rate, it is clear that the latter was in garrison there down to the third century. From the coins which have been discovered it seems possible that Deva was a place of Roman occupation in the fourth century. It is not,

however, mentioned in the *Notitia*, the British part of which, according to Mommsen, was compiled about A.D. 296 or 300, nor is any reference made therein to the twentieth legion. In fact, there is not much to be learnt about Deva from outside sources, for its name is only known to occur once in a foreign inscription, and that is at Worms, and reads: '(In honorem) domu(s) divinae, Marti Loucetio Sacrum, Amandus Velugni f. Devas.'

In the sixth century the place lay waste, and its later history will be dealt with in another chapter. So far as we are now concerned, we may close the account of Deva by the description which Giraldus Cambrensis gives of it some six centuries later than the last-mentioned date, a description which contains no doubt some elements of truth, embellished in the Geraldine manner. 'It is,' he says, 'a genuine city of the Legions, surrounded by walls of brick (or tiles)' —*muris coctilibus circumdata*—'in which many remains of its pristine grandeur are still apparent, namely, immense palaces, a gigantic tower, beautiful baths, remains of temples, and sites of theatres, almost entirely enclosed by excellent walls, in part remaining; also, both within and without the circumference of the walls, subterranean constructions, watercourses, vaults with passages. You may also see furnaces (hypocausts, *stuphas*) constructed with wonderful art, the narrow sides of which exhale heat by concealed spiracles.' Of these marvels, genuine or imaginary, few remain to this day; yet there are abundant relics of the time when Chester was an outpost of the greatest empire the world has seen, and these must now briefly be reviewed. Naturally one turns, in the first place, to the walls, with the view of ascertaining how far they belong to the period with which we are

now concerned. Without dealing here in any complete fashion with the vexed question of the history of the walls, a matter to be subsequently touched upon, it may here be said that the line of the north wall is quite clearly that of the Roman fortification; in fact, when it became necessary in recent years to repair it, the discovery was made that the interior of the lower part was full of inscribed and sculptured stones, the greater part of which had been taken from the cemetery attached to Deva. On the stones thus discovered depends much of the information which it has been possible to accumulate respecting the history of the Roman city. They have been carefully examined and catalogued by Mr. Haverfield, who, in the preface to his excellent *Catalogue of the Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester*, published by the Chester and North Wales Archæological and Historic Society, gives an account of this portion of the wall and the objects found there, which may here be reproduced. The inscriptions and sculptured stones were ranged with considerable regularity inside the lower courses of the wall. These courses were finely faced with massive blocks of evident Roman masonry; the stones in the interior were exclusively of Roman character, and the whole structure of these lower courses may be taken to be Roman. Their precise date is harder to determine. The inscriptions found in them belong principally, as it seems, to the first century and to the earlier half of the second. A few may be as early as A.D. 50-60; those of the Legio II., Adiutrix, may be dated A.D. 70-85; one, on the contrary, cannot be earlier than about A.D. 150. It would, therefore, seem probable that the wall which contained these stones was erected in the latter part of the second

century or in the commencement of the third century. Some building was executed at the latter period, probably between A.D. 198 and 209, in the Roman fort at Carnarvon, and it is possible that the north wall of the fortress at Chester was then built or rebuilt. The east wall, from the Phœnix Tower to Newgate, was apparently built or rebuilt at the same time and in the same manner; but the excavations made in it at various dates have revealed no inscriptions and very few sculptured stones. We may suppose that a cemetery lay ready to hand outside the North Gate and was used, while no such supply was accessible to the builders of the east wall. Whether the building accompanied an enlargement of the fortress is less certain than is generally asserted. The employment of tombstones as a packing for the interior of the wall is certainly a matter calculated to cause considerable astonishment. There would have been nothing remarkable in the fact of later occupants of the city so utilising the relics of dead Roman soldiers. But that Romans themselves should use Roman tombstones can scarcely fail to evoke astonishment. The Roman law, Mr. Haverfield, when dealing with this question, points out, certainly forbade private individuals to disturb graves, but the Roman Government seems to have been free from, or to have over-ridden, the prohibition. When Trajan built his Forum at Rome, early in the second century A.D., the soil which was cleared to make a level space for it was deposited on the top of the tombs along the Via Salaria, and visitors to Rome may now see the great circular monument of Paetus and Polla in the process of being unearthed from Trajan's burial of it. A quite different example may be quoted from the Roman

Wall in England on the frontiers of the empire. At the fort of Aesica (Great Chesters) Roman tombstones were found to form flooring slabs in a Roman edifice, and though the dates of the tombstones and of the edifice are uncertain, it is not improbable that both belong to the second or the opening of the third century. In later times instances abound freely. The towns of Gaul which fortified themselves in the third and fourth centuries largely used their cemeteries as quarries; and at Worms tombstones were used even to ballast a fourth-century roadway. It has accordingly been proposed to date our Chester wall to the fourth century; but it is better work than would be expected at so late a period in Britain, and the hypothesis is not at all necessary. A large number of the inscribed stones so strangely and unexpectedly recovered, together with other objects belonging to the period of the Roman domination, are to be seen in the Grosvenor Museum, where as at Newcastle-on-Tyne, York, and some other places, the student of the early history of this country will find much to throw light upon a part of the subject, concerning which more is to be learnt from the monuments, altars, and other relics which time has spared to us, than from the pages of contemporary writers. In all, at Chester there are about one hundred and thirty tombstones, presenting a great variety of design, but noteworthy for the most part on account of their great size and their ambitious nature. These characteristics are probably due to the fact that they were erected in memory of legionaries, the wealthier class of military men, for in the cases of auxiliaries the stones are fewer in number and smaller in size.

The tombstones discovered in Chester fall into several categories. Simplest of all are the rect-

angular slabs with a moulded border or a triangular gable top, which were set up in the earth with the ashes of the dead person whom they commemorated at their foot. This class of monument was especially affected by the soldiers of the Second Adiutrix. This legion, with the First of the same name, was enrolled somewhere about the year 69 A.D. from amongst the men of the fleets which formed the Mediterranean squadron of the Roman Empire. These fleets were not manned by Roman citizens, but by provincials, many of whom came from Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Thrace. These provincials, however, on enrolment became citizens, and as such were provided with a legal birthplace and tribe, such as all other Roman citizens had. But this birthplace was not necessarily or even probably the spot at which the future soldier saw the light. So that when we find a soldier described upon his tombstone as having been born at Aprus, a Roman *colonia* in Thrace, it does not necessarily mean that he was born there, but that, on becoming a Roman citizen, he was enrolled a member of that town. On the monuments just named, as well as upon those of a more ambitious character which have yet to be mentioned, are to be found, first, the letters D.M., *i.e.* Dis Manibus, equivalent to our 'Sacred to the Memory of,' and then the name of the soldier, his tribe and birthplace—legal or actual—the years of his life and of his military service, and the name of the person who was responsible for the erection of the monument. Of the more ambitious forms of monument, some bear figures of the deceased person in relief. A good example of this kind of tombstone is that shown at the commencement of this chapter (No. 38 in Museum). The inscription reads, 'D.M.

Cæcilius Avitus Emer(ita) Aug(ustos), optis leg. xx. V(aleriæ) V(ictricis) st(i)p(endiorum) xv. Vix(it) an(nos) xxxiiii. H(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit)'—'To the memory of Cæcilius Avitus of Emerita Augusta, 'optio' of the Twentieth Legion, Valeria Victrix, who served 15 years and died at 34. His heir had this erected.' The optio was an officer lower than the centurion, and Emerita was a Roman *colonia* in Lusitania, now Merida in Spain. Another example of this class is the tombstone of a centurion of the Twentieth Legion (No. 37 in Grosvenor Museum). On this monument are full-length figures of the centurion (on the dexter side) and his wife (sinister). He carries a staff in his right hand, and a roll or some similar object in his left. His wife grasps a cup in her right hand, and holds up her dress with her left. The inscription is as follows: 'D.M.—M. Aur(elius) Nepos > leg. xx. V(aleriae) V(ictricis). Coniux pientissima f(aciendum) c(uravit) vixit annis 1'; or, 'To the memory of Marcus Aurelius Nepos, centurion (the sign like a V lying on its side is the centurial sign[1]) in the Twentieth Legion, Valeria Victrix: erected by his dutiful wife. He lived 50 years.' It should be noted that on the left side of this stone there is a further inscription, 'sub ascia d(edicatum),' with a representation above it of two mason's tools, one of which is probably the *ascia*, a sort of combined axe and hammer. The inscription, which means, 'dedicated whilst still under the hammer,' may be taken to mean, what actually was the case with respect to this stone, since there is no inscription for the wife, that it was dedicated before it was quite finished. Mr. Haverfield states that this formula

[1] *i.e.* of the company of one hundred men of which the centurion was the leader.

was much used in southern Gaul, but rarely elsewhere, and that this is its only appearance in Britain. Another type is that on which a triumphant horseman is shown riding over his prostrate barbarian foe. This class of monument, met with in other English collections, originated in Greece, and is to be found at Athens on monuments as early as the fifth century B.C. The Sepulchral Banquet Relief is of still earlier origin, and has been met with in Assyria, Greece, Etruria, and in certain parts of the Roman Empire. 'It is common in the military forts of the Rhine frontier; and, as there was close connexion between the British and Rhenish military arrangements, it may well have reached Deva from the Rhine. Its original significance may have been a representation of ancestor worship, but its use during the Roman Empire seems to have been mostly quite conventional' (Haverfield). Prof. P. Gardiner points out, in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, that the earliest types of this form of monument are to be found on certain early Attic and Laconian tombstones, on which the dead person is represented as seated in state holding a cup and pomegranate to receive the worship of his descendants. The winecup is to remind them to pour out libations to him, whilst the pomegranate is the special food of the dead. In this class of monument the dead person is represented as reclining on a couch by the side of which is a small three-legged table. A good example will be found in No. 66 in the Museum, on which the deceased is represented on a couch, holding a cup in his right hand and a roll in his left. He reclines on his left arm, and by him is his wife or child: below is a three-legged table.

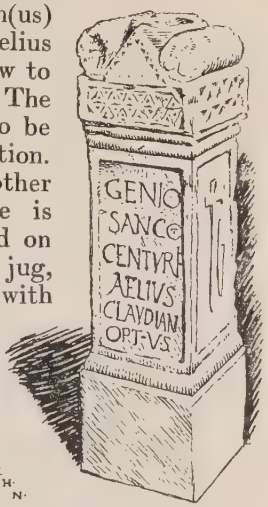
The inscription, which seems to be imperfect at its

conclusion, runs: 'D.M.—C(a)ecilius Donatus, Bessus natione militavit annos xxvi. vixit annos xxxx . . .'; or, 'To the memory of Cæcilius Donatus, by birth a Bessian, who served 26 years, and lived 40 years.' Finally, there are the panels covered with mythical scenes or incidents from daily life: 'Actæon changing into a stag and assailed by his own hounds; Hercules killing the sea-monster and rescuing Hesione, who had been fettered to a rock as its victim; a Siren; a Cupid; and so forth. We have no direct proof that these panels ever formed parts of sepulchral erections. But the fact that they were all found in the North Wall is significant; and it is well known that both in Italy and in the Provinces such scenes were carved on tombs; instances occur, for example, in Germany. Why they were selected for the purpose we do not know, but the custom is here again far older than the Romans. Both the Greeks and, in imitation of them, the Etruscans, employed such scenes in decorating their graves. The artistic skill displayed on these panels, as on all the sculptured tombs of Chester, is very slight, and the execution frequently provokes a smile. The things are indeed the products of soldiers in a remote and frontier fortress. But it is noteworthy that in this remote spot the Roman fashions of sepulchral monuments find full exemplification. And it is hardly less noteworthy that no single stone shows any trace of native influence, of the Late Celtic style, or of any British peculiarity. In this the monuments of Deva resemble those of Britain in general.'[1]

The altars found in and about Chester are comparatively few in number, and bear dedications to the genius of a century, or are dedicated to gods wor-

[1] Haverfield.

shipped by all soldiers. Of the first kind, that figured in the text (No. 2 in the Museum) is an example. The inscription reads: 'Genio Sancto centurie Aelius Claudian(us) optio v(otum) s(olvit)'—'Aelius Claudianus, optio, pays his vow to the Genius of his Century.' The sacrificial knife and axe are to be seen at the side in the illustration. No. 3 in the Museum is another example; on its dexter side is carved the sacrificial dish, and on its sinister the sacrificial jug, whilst the back is ornamented with a zig-zag pattern. It is inscribed 'Genio >' (*i.e.* centuriae), 'To the Genius of the Century.' No. 5, which was found in 1693 at the corner of Newgate Street, has on one side a Genius with a cornucopia, or horn of plenty, and a dish, and on the other a vase with acanthus leaves. On its back is a festoon, and it bears the inscription: 'Pro sal(ute) domin(oru)m n(ostrorum) invic(t)issimorum Aug(ustorum) Genio loci, Flavius Longu(s) trib(unus) mil(itum) leg. xx. v(aleriae) v(ictricis et) Longinus fi[l(ius)] eius domo Samosata, v(otum) s(olvunt)'; or, 'For the safety of our lords the invincible Emperors, dedicated to the Genius of the Spot by Flavius Longus, Military Tribune in the Twentieth Legion, Valeria Victrix, and by his son Longinus, (both) from Samosata.' Another interesting altar is No. 8, which bears upon it an inscription to those



ROMAN ALTAR

strange deities, the Mother Goddesses: 'Deab(us) Matrib(us) v(otum) m(erito),' 'Erected to the Mother Goddesses.' It is doubtful whether these personages were German or perhaps originally Celtic deities, but they were much worshipped on the Rhine, in Roman Britain, and elsewhere. Mr. Haverfield points out that the Roman troops in our island were largely recruited in Germany, and that they probably brought the cult over with them. Attention may be called to one more example, No. 10, which bears a Greek inscription, which, being translated, reads: 'To the Gods that are strong to save, I, Hermogenes, a Physician, set this altar.' Samosata is on the banks of the Euphrates, the Mother Goddesses come from the shores of the Rhine, and the physician is a Greek. These three altars give one a vivid impression of the cosmopolitan composition of the population of so remote an outpost of the empire as was Deva. A further series of objects are the centurial stones, that is, slabs bearing inscriptions commemorating the execution of certain pieces of work, such as road-making and wall-building, by bodies of soldiers, the name of the centurion standing for the century responsible for the work. No. 16 in the Museum is an example of such a stone, with the inscription, 'Coh(ortis) i > Ocrati Maximi. LMP'; or, 'The century of Ocratius Maximus, in the first cohort (of the legion) built this piece of wall.' Mr. Haverfield thinks that the letters LMP stand for the initials of the soldier who cut the stone, and that it probably originally stood in the east wall, between which and Newgate Street it seems to have been found in 1748.

Further relics of the Legio xx. are to be seen in the antefixes for decorating the eaves or pediments of

tiled roofs, which show the boar, the badge of the legion in question: No. 200, shown in the annexed

ANTEFIX, WITH BADGE AND STANDARD OF TWENTIETH LEGION

figure, is an example of this class of object. No. 196, a pig of lead found in 1838 about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of the East Gate, when the railway between Chester and Crewe was under construction, is a good example of the intermediate stage in the utilisation of this metal. Like other pigs found here and elsewhere it bears an inscription, 'IMP. VESP. V. T. IMP. III. COS,' on the top, with the word 'DECEANGI' on the side. The inscription means: 'This pig was cast while

Vespasian was Consul for the fifth time and Titus for the third time (A.D. 74): lead from the mines of the Deceangi.' An example of the finished product can be examined in the shape of a piece of leaden pipe which once formed part of the water service of Deva (No. 199), and was found in 1899 on the north side of Eastgate Street. It is four inches in diameter, and has the inscription which follows on a raised panel forty-eight inches in length: 'Imp(eratore) Vesp(asiano) viiii T(ito) imp(eratore) vii co(n)s(ulibus), Cn(aeo) Iulio Agricola leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)'; or, '(This lead pipe was made) when Vespasian and Titus were consuls for the ninth and seventh times respectively, and when Cn. Iulius Agricola was Governor of Britain.' 'The date is the first half of the year 79. Agricola is the famous Agricola who was Governor of Britain, A.D. 78-85, and whose life was written by his son-in-law Tacitus.'[1] Any person familiar with other museums of Roman objects, such as those at Colchester, York, or Newcastle, can scarcely fail to be struck with the paucity of examples of pottery, and of the small domestic objects which belong to a more settled and comfortable life than that of a soldier on outpost duty, contained in the Chester collection. The absence of such objects is due to the fact that, to use Mr. Haverfield's words, 'ordinary, comfortable middle-class life was absent,' the city was purely military, from first to last a fortress. Owing to the fact that the area of Deva has been built over and occupied for centuries by generations of other races than its Roman originators, it is impossible to construct any ground-plan of the Roman city, or even to say where the west and south walls lay. The line of the north wall can be fairly clearly made out, for

[1] Haverfield.

it corresponds almost absolutely with that of the mediæval rampart. As for the east wall, that stood a few feet further out than the existing structure. In the basement of Messrs. Dickson's seed warehouse in St. John's Street a portion of the Roman wall has been preserved as a memorial. This shows the face and set-off of the outer aspect, and this face is seventeen feet from the face of the existing wall, which may be looked upon as wholly mediæval. The fragment of wall in question is only a part of that which was discovered; for, as a matter of fact, it was exposed in the entire length of the excavations made for the purpose of erecting the buildings. It was not possible to retain this portion of the wall, but the proprietors were good enough to save this fragment, in order that those interested in the subject might see what the old wall actually looked like. The great mass of Roman masonry lying near the Grand Stand, and above the Roodeye, which was almost certainly the Roman Quay, must not be neglected in the consideration of the remains of Deva. A part of the masonry here has been thoroughly exposed and railed off by the Corporation, so that it can be adequately inspected. Of the other important remains of Deva still *in situ*, mention must now be made. In the first place, there are the remains of a bath in Bridge Street, where are to be seen a tank supplied by a spring and a hypocaust. The hypocaust was a chamber under the floor of a room—of course, a ground-floor room—into which hot-air and smoke were admitted from a neighbouring furnace, by which means the room above was warmed. The floor in such cases was composed of concrete supported on pillars, sometimes of stone, sometimes built up of heaps of tiles. Such objects are to be seen in the remains of Roman cities and villas in different

parts of the kingdom. In Chester the pillars of a hypocaust—not, of course, *in situ*—are to be seen in the public garden near the Water Tower. In the particular instance with which we are now concerned, there are in the Bridge Street hypocaust twenty-eight pillars still standing, each of which is two and a half feet in height, and one foot square at the top and bottom. On the opposite side of the same street, and somewhat nearer to the Cross, there are some important remains in the back of a house called 'The Grotto.' These consist of a low wall, on the top of which are the bases of some pillars, showing that here there was some kind of colonnade. When this discovery was made, it was also found that on the opposite side of the pillars to that on which the visitor stands there was a water-trough or gutter. This, unfortunately, cannot now be seen, as it is covered by the wall of the room which has been built upon it.

In Watergate Street, behind a butcher's shop (Crew's), is the base of a Roman pillar *in situ*, which gives us the level of the street at this point in Roman times. Again, in Northgate Street, on the west side, and under a shop known as Vernon's Toy Bazaar, there are the bases of some very large pillars, obviously from their size the pillars of some very important building. The shaft of one of these, lying on its side, is to be seen projecting into the basement. The remainder of the pillar, probably with further portions of the building, no doubt lies concealed under the adjacent house. If we accept the statement that St. Peter's Church occupied the position of the Prætorium, it will be seen that the building with whose remains we are now concerned was very close to that spot, and may very probably have been one of the important public edifices of Deva. In any case, we

may safely regard the mediæval centre of the city, where the High Cross stood and the Pentice over-

ROMAN CARVING BY EDGAR'S CAVE

looked the four streets, where St. Peter's Church still

stands, as having been the centre also of Deva. We may also believe that the four main streets of modern Chester occupy practically the position of the four main thoroughfares of the Roman city. In fact, Foregate Street, Eastgate Street, and Watergate Street are all parts of that great road which traversed London, and thence ran to Chester, which in Saxon times came to be called the Watling Street. This was one of the most important of all the great roads which the military genius of the Roman conquerors constructed in this country. Leading, as it did, from the ports in the south-east corner of the island, through London, to the great city of Viroconium, now the petty village of Wroxeter, beneath the shadow of the Wrekin, it worked its way to Chester, and there connected with the roads leading into the wild districts of Wales. At Viroconium a second road, now also called the Watling Street, passed through Shropshire, by the Stettons which owe their name to their proximity to this Via, and Herefordshire, as far as Caerleon-on-Usk. By means of these two streets Deva was connected with its sister fortress on the southern limit of the marches of Wales. It was also connected by the main street with London and with other important stations and cities which lay in the course of this great and important military highway. It is certain that the Roman city was of far smaller dimensions than the present area enclosed by the walls, but Deva may have been enlarged more than once. Amongst the relics of the Roman occupation there is one outside the walls which calls for some notice, and that is the statue of Minerva which is carved on the rock in Edgar's Field, beside the cavity known as Edgar's Cave. The figure, as may be seen from the

drawing, is now almost obliterated, but it is believed to represent the goddess in question, her right arm supported by a spear. On the same side is an altar, and over her left shoulder is the owl, her symbol. There was in Roman times a ford across the Dee at this point, and the road from it led past this rock. It is possible that there may here have been a shrine where travellers prayed or made offerings either before or after encountering the dangers of the passage.

OLD NORTH GATE

WHITE FRIARS
Bridge St
Chester
E·H·NEW·

CHAPTER II

THE SAXON AND NORMAN PERIODS

THE WATER TOWER

WE have no certain knowledge as to the date at which the Roman soldiers left Chester, nor can we come to any definite conclusion as to the exact fate of the Roman city after their departure. Probably it may have remained a 'waste chester' for some considerable period, for there was no civic population, as for example at Viroconium, to continue the life of the town after the departure of the military. But when the Saxon invaders had driven the native Britons from their homes on the eastern side of the island to take refuge with their brethren on the west, Chester once more becomes a place of historic interest. Roughly speaking, we may think of England at a certain point of the Saxon period as longitudinally divided between invaders and invaded—the former possessing the eastern, the latter the western

half. This latter continuous strip of territory, to which alone the name of Britain properly belonged, was divided into three parts by two decisive and important battles. That fought at Deorham in 577, on the Cotswold Hills, not far from Bath, divided what we now know as the Principality of Wales from southern Britain, consisting of parts of Somerset and Devon and Cornwall. And in a similar manner the battle of Chester, in 607, cut off the Principality from the northern Britain of the district of Strathclyde and Northumbria. Prior to this engagement, Cheshire had formed part of the kingdom of Gwynedd, as North Wales was called, and it was to the destruction of this part of the British realm that Aethelfrith, king of Northumbria, looked as the result of the conflict. The Saxon forces were met by all the men that the British prince could collect, and with them came a large body of monks, from the monastery of Bangor Iscoed, to assist with their prayers. This religious establishment, situated in Flintshire, about twenty miles from Chester, was a place of very great importance in the monastic world—'the mother of all others in the world,' says one writer, with perhaps pardonable exaggeration. It had amongst its sons at least two men whose names are never likely to be forgotten. The first of these, one Morgan, better known under his other name of Pelagius, was the author of a once-famous heresy; whilst the other, Gildas, the first of the historians of Britain, in his work *De excidio Britanniæ*, gives a lurid picture of the treatment which the unfortunate Celts received at the hands of their Saxon invaders. According to a legend connected with the battle, there were no fewer than one thousand monks from this establishment present at the battle of Chester. After

learning who they were and what the object of their presence, Aethelfrith is reported to have ordered that they also should be slain, in the event of victory waiting upon the Saxon banners, saying, 'Whether they bear arms or not, they fight against us by crying to their God.' The destruction of this large body of ecclesiastics was afterwards regarded as the fulfilment of the prophecy uttered by St. Augustine, at the time when the representatives of the Britons refused to accept his authority and conform to the customs of the rest of the Christian Church. Later on Mercia secured what Northumbria had originally appropriated: Wulfhere, king of the first-named district, seizing from the northern king that part of his dominions which, lying south of the Mersey, includes the modern Cheshire. Wulfhere was the first Christian king of Mercia, so that under his sway Chester, we may suppose, was once more freed from paganism. An abiding memorial of his sovereignty is to be found not only in Chester but also in other parts of what was once the kingdom of Mercia, in the dedication of churches to his daughter St. Werburgh, a characteristically Mercian saint. She was professed a nun under her aunt St. Aethelthryth or Audrey at Ely, and afterwards had the direction of several convents. She died at Trentham and was buried at Hanbury in Staffordshire, from which place her bones were brought to Chester in 875, for greater security, on the advance of the Danish army to Repton, and were deposited in the church of SS. Peter and Paul. This church was removed to a site at the Cross, and the original edifice was turned into a house of secular priests. The dedication of this church, whose successor is the present cathedral of the city, was altered to that of SS. Werburgh and

Oswald, perhaps during the reign of Athelstan, but certainly during some part of the Anglo-Saxon period; and as the church of St. Werburgh it was most commonly known. There is a church with the same ascription in Dublin, and knowing the close connection which existed between that city and Chester, one might be tempted to imagine that the Irish church should be affiliated to that just mentioned. Mr. Hunt, however, is of opinion that the Dublin church is a descendant of that at Bristol, for there also, in another corner of Mercia, is an edifice dedicated to the Mercian saint.

After the Mercian rule came that of Wessex, under which dominion Chester fell in 828, only to become a few years later the prey of the Danes, who held the city until it was reduced by a siege. Subsequently the boundary line of the Danelagh was drawn along the old Roman road, known as Watling Street, which runs from London to Chester. What was once Mercia, or rather the remnants of that once powerful kingdom, was placed under the supervision of Aethelred, as ealdorman. This noble, who had married Aethelflaed, Aelfred's sister, is somewhat overshadowed, in military matters, by his wife, who, under the name of the Lady of Mercia, is given, by the chroniclers, the credit of having fortified, after his death, many places of importance along the marches of her division of the country. Amongst these may be mentioned Warwick, Tamworth, Stafford, and Chester, with its supporting fortress of Eddisbury Castle, the earthworks of which 'chamber of the forest,' are still to be seen in Delamere Forest. It was in 907 that the ruins of Chester were repaired, and that fortress once more manned to separate the Danes from the Welsh and from the Irish Channel.

It was at this time also that a house of secular canons was founded, the precursor of the great abbey of later days. Still later in the Saxon period, Chester is said to have been the scene of the triumph of Edgar the Peaceable, and, as Bishop Creighton remarks, 'however imaginative may be the details of this glorification of the great English king, the choice of Chester as its scene marks the importance of the growing town.' It is in 973, two years after his coronation at Bath, that the monarch is said to have appeared under the walls of Chester, and to have held his court at a place still known as Edgar's field and situated near the old bridge. Higden, the monk of Chester, narrates how the eight Reguli or tributary kings, whom Edgar had summoned to Chester, were compelled to row their overlord on the Dee. 'Edgar one day entering his barge, assumed the helm and made his tributaries row him from the palace which stood in a field which still bears his name, up the Dee to the church of St. John, and from thence back to his palace.' One more legend connected with the close of the Saxon period must be narrated before this part of the story is closed, and that is the tale which connects Chester with the last days of Saxon rule. For according to a tale told by Giraldus Cambrensis, and perhaps implicitly believed at his time, Harold was not really slain at the battle of Senlac, but only wounded, and subsequently became a hermit at Chester where he died in the odour of sanctity. 'Gyraldus Cambrensis,' says the Monk of Chester, 'in his boke called *Itenerarius*, wolde meane that Harolde had many woundes, and lost his lefte eye with the strooke of an arrow, and was overcome, and escaped to the countie of Chester, and lyved there holyly, as man troweth, an anker's lyfe, in

Saynt James' celle, fast by Saynt John's chyrch, and made a goede ende, and was knowen by his last confessyon and the commune fame accorded in the cytie to that same.' That there was at that time

ANCHORITE'S CELL

and for many years afterwards, a celebrated hermitage on the rock overlooking the river Dee to the south of St. John's Church, there can be no doubt, but that Harold ever occupied it is merely one of those legends which tend to grow up around the name of dead heroes, even the heroes of lost causes. The building now on the rock, shown in the figure, is, of

course, not the original cell. Higden, it may be mentioned before leaving this story, also adds that when the death of King Harold was known to Edwin and Morcar, Earls of Mercia and Northumberland, they took Aedytha his wife and sent her to Chester. During the Saxon period, Chester, like some other towns, seems to have been the seat of a mint. It is true that it is not specifically mentioned amongst the towns to which the privilege was conceded, but its name appears under its Saxon guise of Legeceaster on various coins. As this very closely resembles, however, the Saxon name of Leicester, it is difficult always to say at which place a coin may have been struck. Eleven pennies of Athelstan are known, and several of Cnut. We may dispose of Chester as a local centre of coinage by adding that, in the time of Charles I., half-crowns, most of which bore, as mint-mark, a rose, were struck in the city; and that, during the reign of William III., the last in which coins were struck at Chester, half-crowns, shillings, and sixpenny pieces were minted, 101,660 pounds of silver being used up for the purpose.

The Saxon crosses, probably of the ninth century, now in St. John's Church, described on p. 185, are further relics of this period of great interest and importance.

Chester occupies a prominent position in connection with the Norman Conquest, even if we do not admit the truth of the legend about Harold, for it was the last town in England to recognise the sway of the Conqueror. After harrying the north, which had refused peaceably to submit to his rule, William advanced upon Chester, devastating the country as he passed through it. It was then the depth of winter, but the unhappy fugitives had to make a

long journey before they could find a place of rest, for it was not until they came to the great Abbey of Evesham that they were able to secure a temporary place of abode. The consequences which followed upon the capture of Chester were identical with those which took place in hundreds of other instances. The burgh of the Saxon lord may have become the site of the castle of the Norman earl, and the keep which was the essential part of such a fortress was often erected upon an earlier earthen mound, perhaps the work of the first Norman occupant. Whether such a mound had been piled up on the sandstone cliff above the Dee, after the time of the Lady of Mercia, and if so what may have been its exact position, we cannot absolutely say, though Mr. Cox thinks that it occupied the spot where the flag-tower stood. But that the site of her fortress became that of the Norman castle, its successor, there can be little doubt. It was not the only castle erected in this important part of the Norman dominions, for there were others at Beeston, Hawarden, and Halton, with smaller military centres at Dodleston, Alford, Pulford, Holt, and Shotwick; but it was the chief fortress, and its earl was the principal defender of the inland districts from the incursions of the wild and unconquered tribes of Wales. The earldom was first conferred by William upon one Gerbod, a Fleming, but he is of little importance in the history of Chester, for he went across the seas, was unsuccessful in war, and was soon superseded by the Conqueror's own nephew, Hugh of Avranches, better known, from his ferocious disposition, as Hugo Lupus, or the Wolf. He it was who was responsible for the reduction to order of Cheshire, and by him were built the fortresses to which allusion has just been made. By him too

the secular canons of St. Werburgh's were replaced by regular clergy, and the Mercian bishopric of Lichfield was for a time transferred to his own city, where the Church of St. John was the cathedral of the occupant of the see.

The terms by which the earldom was granted seem to have conferred an almost royal dignity upon its holder, for he was to hold of the king 'tam libere ad gladium, sicut ipse Rex tenebat Angliam ad coronam,' as freely by the sword as the king held England by the crown. Matthew Paris and others considered that this statement was only intended to convey that the Earl of Chester was the hereditary sword-bearer to the king; and it is pointed out that, on the marriage of Henry III. with Eleanor in 1236, 'the Earl of Chester then carried the sword of St. Edward, which is called *Curtein* (the sword of mercy), before the king in token that he was an Earl Palatine, and had power by right to restrain the king if he should do amiss, his constable of Chester attending him and beating back the people with a rod or staff when they press disorderly upon him.' However this may be, there can be no doubt that the earl did exercise many of the rights of a sovereign, and that within his own territories he was almost supreme. In the words of Camden—'Cheshire enjoyed all sovereign jurisdiction within its own precinct, and that in so high degree that the ancient earls had parliaments of their own barons and tenants, and were not obliged by the English Acts of Parliament. These high and otherwise unaccountable jurisdictions were thought necessary upon the marches and borders of the kingdom as investing the governors of those provinces with dictatorial power, and enabling them more effectually to subdue the common enemies of the nation.' At

The City of Chester

Westminster pleas ran 'contra coronam et dignitatem regis,' but in the courts of the Palatinate it was 'contra dignitatem gladii Cestriae.' The sword thus invoked is still in the British Museum: it has a two-edged blade, is about four feet long, and has on its hilt the inscription, 'Hugo Comes Cestriae.' Hugh appears to have been invested with the dignities belonging to his earldom in 1070, and continued to enjoy them not merely during the reign of the Conqueror but also during that of William Rufus and a part of that of Henry I. He seems to have died in 1101 and was buried, as were also some of his successors, beneath the Chapter-House of the Abbey. He was succeeded by his son Richard, the only child of his wife Ermentrude, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Beauvoys in France. At the time of his father's death this son was only seven years of age, and became the ward of Henry I., who sent him to France to be brought up with his own children. When his education was completed he was married to Maude, daughter of Stephen, Earl of Blois, and through her mother Adela, a granddaughter of the Conqueror; but the Earl and Countess never held state in their city of Chester, for both were drowned, together with William and Richard, Henry I.'s sons, and many other distinguished persons, on board the ill-fated White Ship. The direct line of Hugo Lupus having thus untimely come to an end, the earldom came into the possession of Ranulph des Meschines. This nobleman had been made Earl of Carlisle, when that city was created an earldom by Henry I. Bishop Creighton in his *History of Carlisle* says that Ranulph married an heiress who possessed all the district known as Amounderness—that is, the south-west corner of Cumberland, the south of Westmoreland, Lancashire

north of the Ribble, and a bit of Yorkshire. It was an extremely extensive area, but more extensive than profitable, so that he exchanged it with the crown for the earldom of Chester. This earl, who was apparently a man of a peaceable disposition and very generous to the Church, was succeeded by his son, also a Ranulph, and commonly distinguished by his surname of Gernons. During the troublous reign of Stephen this noble played an important part in the affairs of the realm. His first cause of complaint against the monarch was that the earldom of Carlisle, which he claimed as his patrimony, had been taken from him and conferred upon Henry, the son of David King of Scotland. Determined to regain this earldom, and moved no doubt further by the fact that his wife was the niece of Matilda, Gernons made up his mind to embrace the cause of the Empress. At the battle of Lincoln, the earl and his soldiers assisted in the defeat and capture of the king. Still later, these two enemies became at least outwardly reconciled to one another, for Ranulph went to the Court, then at Northampton, to ask for help against the Welsh, but Stephen seized the opportunity of arresting his former captor, who was only released under conditions. A turbulent career was terminated by a tragic end, for the earl died of poison, whilst under sentence of excommunication, in the year 1153.

Men likened Ranulph Gernons, says Miss Harris, to Herod and Nero, saying he united the evil qualities—cruelty and truculence—of both these ancient potentates. At one time Gernons held the third part of England under his sway; but, powerful as he was, he brought little save calamity on his dependants.

He was succeeded by Hugh Cyveilioc, his son, who,

like most of the Earls of Chester, found plentiful occupation in fighting with the Welsh. In 1170, according to the Chronicle of St. Werburgh, he 'slew a multitude of Welshmen near the bridge of Baldert, of whose heads one of the mounds at the hospital for the sick outside Chester is formed,' the mound in question being one of the Boughton Hills which were levelled in 1557. Hugh, in his turn, was succeeded by his son, Ranulph III., known from Whitchurch, the place of his birth, as Blundeville, one of the most distinguished of the Earls of Chester, and for fifty years a man of immense influence throughout the kingdom. So great was his fame that after his death tales and songs were composed in honour of his deeds, real or mythical—the 'rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolf Erle of Chester,' familiar to the priest in Piers Plowman who 'can nought perfectly his paternoster.' To give any account, however brief, of one who was the counsellor in succession of four kings, namely, Henry II., Richard I., John, and Henry III., would occupy more space than can here be assigned. Like some other distinguished military leaders, he was small in stature, a fact which we learn from the traditional remark of the Earl of Perch, prior to the battle in which that noble and his leader, Prince Louis of France, were defeated at Lincoln: 'Have we staid all this time for such a little man, such a dwarf?' In his time peace was made with the Welsh, and that it might be lasting, the earl married his heir-apparent John le Scot, to Helen, daughter of Llewelyn, Prince of North Wales. Having thus settled matters in his own district, he went to the Holy Land, in fulfilment of a vow made long before, took part in the capture of Damietta, and 'returned to Chester on the morn of the Assumption, August 16, 1220, and was received

with the greatest veneration by the clergy as well as the laity.' He returned to fresh troubles, both with the Welsh and with his sovereign, and dying in 1232 was succeeded by his nephew, of whom mention has just been made. It was this earl, John, the last of the Norman earls, who carried the sword called Curtayne at the marriage of Henry III. with Eleanor. Fifty years had his uncle been earl, but to the nephew only one-tenth of that number of years was allowed. Five years after he succeeded to his earldom he died, poisoned, as many have thought, by that very Helen to whom he had been married in the delusive hope that a permanent peace with North Wales would be the result of their union. Thus in 1237 the line of Norman earls came to an end, and the earldom was taken into the hands of the king. The military importance of Chester, the especial significance of which was intensified at a time when North Wales was ruled by a prince so aggressive and skilful, the danger of leaving such a possession in the hands of those who might be little friendly to himself, all these arguments no doubt weighed with the monarch in thus dealing with the earldom. Henry III. gave the earldom to his son, afterwards Edward I., and from that time down to the present the earldom has remained, like the dukedom of Cornwall, an appanage of the eldest son of the reigning monarch; but with this difference between the two, that whilst the heir is born Duke of Cornwall, he only becomes Earl of Chester should the sovereign so create him. The castle and city, indeed the whole county of Cheshire, were, however, for a time in the hands of King Henry's great opponent, Simon de Montfort, to whom they were granted after the battle of Lewes. Lucas de Taney was appointed de Montfort's Justiciary in Chester, and by him the

city was held until Edward, after his victory at Evesham, besieged the castle on Trinity Sunday and compelled its defenders to surrender.

Edward I. was frequently in Chester. It was there, in the church of St. Werburgh, that he took part in the solemn service of thanksgiving which commemorated the subjugation of Wales. Here, too, in 1301, homage was paid by the freeholders of Wales to Prince Edward of Carnarvon, who had been created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester. Richard II. was in Chester in 1394 on his way to Ireland, for which country this was one of the chief ports, the Dee at that time washing the walls on the western side, and being still deep enough for the ships of small tonnage then employed whether as men of war or as transports. The king, accompanied by a number of noblemen, was met outside the city by its mayor and escorted within the walls. It was on this occasion that a sword of state, though not that which is at present in existence, was presented by the king to the city. On his final visit he was to be received in a very different manner. In 1399 he had again gone to Ireland, and during his operations there—operations of a very unsatisfactory character—Henry Bolingbroke, whom he had banished, returned to the country, and took possession of many of its most important fortresses and towns. Amongst others he secured Chester, and celebrated his entrance into the town by beheading Peter Legh, who had remained faithful to the king, in spite of the fact that he was the brother of Sir Robert Legh and John Legh who had been Bolingbroke's chief agents in obtaining admission to the city. Northumberland was sent to Conway Castle, where the king was, with instructions to take him prisoner and bring him to Chester. It

was at Flint Castle, however, that Bolingbroke actually met the king, who had been induced to come to that place from Conway. From Flint he was taken to Chester, and there lodged either in the donjon or in the tower over the great gateway, opposite Gloverstone. With him were confined Salisbury, the Bishop of Carlisle, and two knights. Thence he was removed to the Tower of London, and in that city his abdication of the throne took place. Henry IV. was not, however, done with Chester. The county, on account no doubt, in large measure, of the fact that the king's writ did not run within its boundaries, had become a nuisance to its neighbours, who, it is recorded, had long denounced it 'as a den of robbers from which murderers and cut-throats issued for nightly raids upon the persons and cattle of their peaceful inhabitants, claiming the immunities of a County Palatine to defy the king's officers of justice.' These lawless persons professed great attachment to the cause of Richard II., who had always shown himself possessed of great affection for the men of Cheshire. In 1400 an attempt was made, but unsuccessfully, by a body of men adorned with the White Hart, Richard's cognizance, to take possession of the castle of Chester. Still later, many men of the shire joined with Henry Percy, who had been made Justice of North Wales and Constable of the castles of Chester, Flint, Conway, Denbigh, and Carnarvon, when he rebelled against his king and became a sharer in Glyndwr's movement. The battle of Shrewsbury, in fact, was commenced by a furious discharge of arrows from the Cheshire archers, who were looked upon as being the finest forces under the control of the rebel leaders. After the battle one of the quarters of Percy's body was sent to be hung over the gate of Chester. Henry

then decided to drive forth from the city all the Welsh who resided in it. These turbulent neighbours had long inflicted injuries upon the city—in fact, the suburb beyond the old bridge, now known as Handbridge, had been so frequently sacked by them that it had acquired the name of Treboeth, or 'the burnt town.' No doubt it was thought safer that all members of a race from which the city had suffered so much should be excluded from its interior and live outside, as was the case at Shrewsbury, where the Welsh town of Frankwell was on the opposite side of the river from the town proper, and approached by the well-protected Welsh Bridge. Accordingly we find Henry, Prince of Wales, issuing directions to the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of Chester that they shall 'cause to be driven without the walls of the city aforesaid all manner of Welshmen of either sex, male as well as female; in such sort that they may be thoroughly driven forth of the said city, and that no Welshman, or any person of Welsh extraction or sympathies, of whatsoever state or condition, remain within the walls of the said city, or enter in to the same before sunrise on any day on any excuse, or tarry in the same after sunset, under pain of decapitation, and on no day whatsoever journey or presume to enter the said city with arms upon him, under pain of forfeiture of the said arms, saving only a knife for cutting his dinner. And that they enter into no wine or beer tavern in the same city, and that they hold no meetings or assemblies in the same, and that three of the same Welshmen meet not together within the walls aforesaid; which thing if they do, they shall be forthwith taken for rebels against the peace, and be committed to our gaol of the city aforesaid, there to remain until we take

order about their liberation.' No evidence could be more eloquent than these stringent regulations of the fear which the Welsh insurgents had inspired in the breasts of those responsible for the safety of Chester and the district of which it was the military centre. As the danger from the Welsh passed gradually away, these regulations were relaxed or fell into abeyance, members of that race coming back to the city towards the end of the reign of Henry v., and attaining in some cases to positions of dignity and importance therein. After this time, the civic annals tell of constant riots and disturbances on the part of the more lawless inhabitants of the city and county until, in 1434, Henry vi. issued a commission to the chamberlain and vice-chamberlain of the county of Chester with the object of inducing the inhabitants to unite in putting a stop to these unseemly occurrences. The commission does not, however, appear to have been very successful, for Canon Morris states that in 1452 the lawlessness was so daring, that several men employed by Adam Lokkes, the locksmith, carried away ten stones from the city walls, a theft the possibility of which shows not only the laxity of vigilance, but that the walls must at that time have been in a very ruinous condition. An outlet for the fighting blood of the district was shortly afterwards found at the battle of Blore Heath, where the Earl of Salisbury defeated Queen Margaret's army, containing many Cheshire men in its ranks, and led by Lord Audley. After the battle two of Salisbury's sons, Sir John and Sir Thomas Neville, who had been seriously wounded, were brought into Chester and confined in the castle.

During the period of the Wars of the Roses, the inhabitants of Chester seem to have been con-

stantly engaged in strife with those of neighbouring places, and Canon Morris cites from Pennant an account of one such feud, which may serve as an example of the state of affairs which prevailed at the time. Tower, near Mold, during the Wars of the Roses, was, he tells us, inhabited by Reinallt ap Gryffyd ap Bleyddyn, one of the six gallant captains who defended Harlech Castle on the part of Henry VI. Reinallt and his people were in continual feud with the citizens of Chester. In 1465 a considerable number of the latter came to Mold fair, when a fray ensued between the two parties. A dreadful slaughter took place on both sides; but Reinallt obtained the victory. He took prisoner Robert Bryne, linen-draper and Mayor of Chester in 1461, whom he led to his tower and hung on the staple in his great hall. An attempt was made afterwards to seize Reinallt, and two hundred tall men sallied from Chester for that purpose. He retired from his house to a neighbouring wood, permitted part of his enemies to enter the building, then rushing from his cover fastened the door, and, setting fire to the place, burned them without mercy; he then attacked the rest and pursued them to the seaside, where those who escaped the sword perished in the Channel. Still later, Reinallt, instigated by a local bard, named Lewis Glyn Cothi, made a further onslaught on the Cestrians, for we are told that 'Reinallt, being ripe for the enterprise, collected his people, went to Chester, and put the citizens, as many as fell into his hands, to the sword.'

A characteristically picturesque and inaccurate account of these occurrences is given by Borrow in his *Wild Wales*.

Cheshire men took a large part in the battle of

Bosworth Field, for at that conflict Sir John Savage, son of Sir John Savage of Clifton, and Mayor of Chester, had charge of the left wing. Henry made him a Knight of the Garter—it was a time when merit did sometimes secure that decoration—and in his letters-patent compliments him upon the services which he rendered 'in conjunction with the copious multitude of his brothers, kinsmen, servants and friends, at great cost and personal risk in the battle against King Richard.' In 1498 Prince Arthur came to Chester, where he remained for more than a month, and had presented before him the Mystery Play of the Assumption, which was performed before the Abbey gateway. He gave to the Company of Smiths of the city the silver medal which they still possess. The gift is recorded in the books of the company as follows:—'Thomas Edyan, smith to Prince Arthur, being atte the Castle of Chester on the 14th yeare of the reigne of Henrie the Seventh, his father then beinge King of England. And att the same tyme, Prince Arthur gave unto the sayd Edyan a crown of silver guilt, a hammer with horseshoe and pincers, the arms of smiths, to them and theire successors for ever.' During the reign of the same sovereign the great charter of Chester was granted, a point which will receive further consideration in another chapter.

About this time, too, those privileges which had belonged to Cheshire as a County Palatine, which had distinguished it from most other English counties, and which had helped to make it so troublesome to its neighbours, began to be withdrawn. Cheshire was no longer an outpost position, and there was no reason why it should be dealt with exceptionally, rather every reason to the contrary. Henry VIII. ordered that Justices of the Peace should be appointed

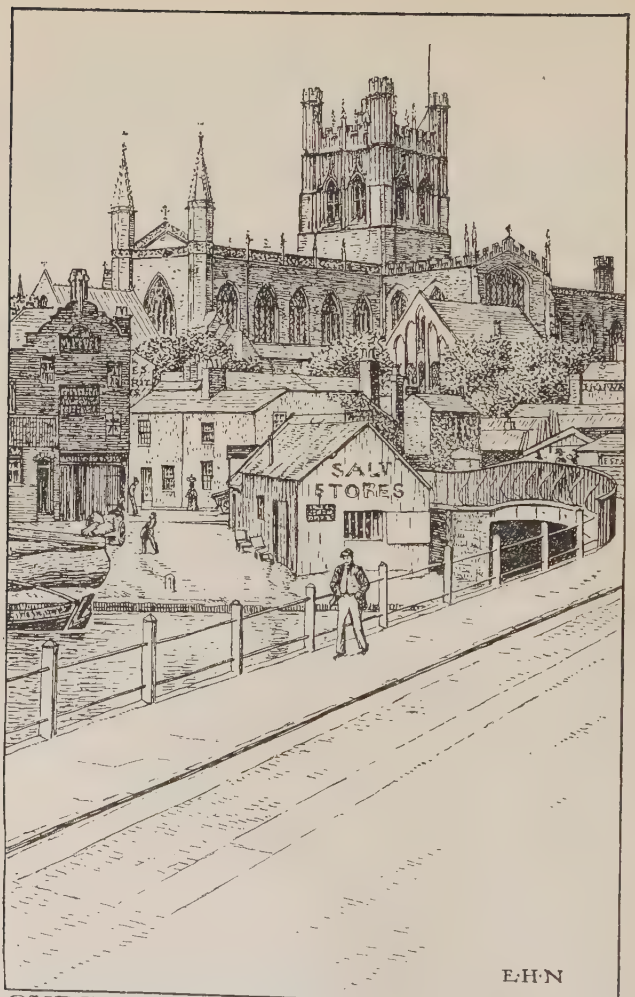
in Chester and in Wales, as in other parts of the kingdom. The preamble of the Act, which was passed in 1535, expressly states that justice had not in the past been equally dealt in the county of Chester. Up to this time the county, again on account of its peculiar legal position, had sent no representatives to the Parliament of the realm, its earls having, as has been pointed out, a kind of small parliament of their own. But five years after the Act just alluded to, this anomaly also disappeared, and representatives were called up—two knights representing the shire, and two burgesses the city.

Such a change was one of first-class importance to the city and to the County Palatine of which it was the capital. Up to this time Chester and the district around it may almost have been looked upon as a separate sovereign state, of limited independence it is true, and owing suit and service to its suzerain, the King of England, but in other respects a distinct and independent area, making its own laws and subject to its own customs. One may almost compare it to the Isle of Man as it exists at the present day, with its House of Keys, in a word with Home Rule. Such a state of affairs may be quite conceivable in the case of a small detached island and in these times of peace, but it is not one which could long continue in a district separated from its neighbours by merely artificial boundaries, as was the case with the County Palatine. It is obvious that such an *imperium in imperio* could not continue after the causes which had led to its being set up became no longer operative. Hence the changes just alluded to had for their object the incorporation of the county into the general body of the kingdom.

Thus we arrive at a very definite stage in the

history of the city, a turning-point in its career, the moment at which it sheds its old-time privileges to merge its life more fully in that of the nation; at a period of history, too, when ancient landmarks were being removed, a new religion taking the place of the old, monasteries disappearing and cathedral establishments in some places arising on their foundations. Of these changes it will be necessary to speak separately and in connection with their bearing upon the ecclesiastical and civic life of the city.

OLD WATERGATE



CHESTER CATHEDRAL *from the N.E.*

CHAPTER III

CHESTER UNDER LATER SOVEREIGNS

THE OLD SHIP GATE

AS already mentioned, the most important events, other than those civic changes alluded to in the last chapter, which occurred during the reigns of Henry VIII., his son, and his eldest daughter, were related to the change of religion then taking place, and will be dealt with in their proper place in connection with the ecclesiastical history of the city. It will be convenient, however, to mention two events which are associated with the reign of Queen Mary. The first of these is the burning of George Marsh on the 25th of April 1555. He was a Protestant minister,

who was tried in the Lady Chapel of the cathedral on the charge of heretical and blasphemous preaching against the Pope's authority and the Church of Rome. He was burnt at the Spital, Boughton, 'constantly enduring his martyrdom with such patience as was wonderful,' says the Cowper MSS.

Another occurrence attributed to this reign is narrated in all histories of Chester, and must not be here omitted, although the evidence for it is perhaps not of the strongest. In 1588 the Dean of St. Paul's, London, was one Dr. Henry Cole, who appears to have belonged to the honourable order of Vicars of Bray. He fell in with all the diverse views of Henry VIII. on religious subjects, he was a zealous promoter of the Reformation during the times of Edward VI., and under Mary he disputed against Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and preached the sermon at the burning of the first of these persons. The story in question is associated with this individual, and may be given in the words of Canon Morris. Cole was sent by Queen Mary with a special commission to the Privy Council of Ireland, for the suppression of heresy. He stopped one night on his way at the 'Blue Posts,' Chester, on the east side of Bridge Street, then kept by a Mrs. Elizabeth Mottershead. The mayor called upon Dr. Cole, who, in explaining his errand, brought out of his cloak-bag a leathern box, saying, 'Here is what will lash the heretics of Ireland.' The landlady overhearing this and fearing for the safety of her brother, John Edmunds, who lived in Dublin, took the opportunity, while Dr. Cole was conducting the mayor downstairs, to remove the warrant from the box, placing in its stead a package of similar bulk and weight. Dr. Cole on reaching Dublin (7th October 1588) delivered

the box to the Lord Deputy, Lord Fitzwalter, at the Castle. Great was the consternation of the Council to find that the box contained only a pack of cards, with the knave of clubs uppermost. The Lord Deputy said, 'Let us have another commission, and we will meanwhile shuffle the cards.' The cards were indeed 'shuffled.' For though Dr. Cole was immediately sent to England and obtained a new commission, while staying for a wind at the waterside he received intelligence that Queen Mary was dead and was succeeded by the 'Protestant Queen.' The landlady was rewarded for her ingenuity and zeal with a pension of £40 a year. Though the 'Blue Posts' has long been divided into shops, the card-room, an oak-panelled apartment with fine ceiling, still remains untouched.

During the reign of Elizabeth, Protestant opinions being in the ascendant, the other side had their turn of persecution. The city was, as Canon Morris points out, strongly Protestant, and as such was in complete harmony with the Chamberlain of Chester, Lord Leicester, who posed as the champion of that form of belief. Many prosecutions took place against so-called recusants, a state of affairs which continued with at least equal severity during the succeeding reign. All symbols associated with Catholicity were destroyed, and in 1577 it is stated that 'most of the crosses of and about Chester were pulled downe except the High Crosse.' A sheriff of the name of Mutton appears to have been the person largely responsible for these operations, 'a godly zealous man, who not long before his death pulled down certain crosses by a commission from the archbishop's visitors: one at the Bars, another at the Northgate, and another on this side Spital, Boughton, which so offended the

papists that they ascribed to it the cause of his death.'

The fact that Chester was a seaport of importance made the authorities regard it as a likely spot for the introduction of priests from foreign colleges, who were, as we know, brought into the kingdom in considerable numbers to minister to their persecuted co-religionists, and in many cases paid for their performance of their duties with their life. Hence we find a commission issued, 1587, by Elizabeth to the Bishop, Mayor, Aldermen, and Dean of Chester, 'about panaling a jury to enquire about seminary priestes come to England, and Jesuites of malicious purpose to seduce divers of our people from ther dutys to God and to us, and to renounce their allegiance and to adhere to the King of Spayne and to the Pope, whensoever they shall attempt any invasion agaynst our realme.' They are directed 'to try search and examyne, within the Citty of Chester and all parts thereof, what persons have come from beyond the seas into England since the Feast of Michaelmas.' Care was also taken that Catholic young men should not be removed from the kingdom for the purpose of obtaining abroad that instruction in their religion which was refused to them at home. In 1594 mention is made of 'several youths who were under the charge of one Bartholomew Wickam, who had purpose to transport themselves beyond seas to places of popish religion.'

Passing from this aspect of the reign with which we are now concerned, we find Chester's value as a port exemplified by the large number of soldiers who were thence despatched to the various wars by which Ireland was ravaged. From 1573 to the end of the

century we meet with constant accounts of the passage of soldiers through the city on their way to the sister island, and of the trouble which these bands caused to the inhabitants and especially to the mayor. That functionary had no sinecure whilst his city was being used as the port of departure by the Elizabethan regiments.

The expedition of 1573 was conducted by Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, and intended for the settlement of the North of Ireland. Half the expense of this expedition was borne by the Queen, but, nevertheless, its unfortunate leader was entirely ruined by it. During succeeding years there was an unceasing stream of soldiers passing through the city, for whose lodging and victualling as well as for their good conduct and safe despatch from English shores, the mayor for the time being had to be responsible. The following draft of a letter from the mayor to Lord Burghley, printed in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, will give a good idea of the kind of correspondence which such duties entailed. 'Right Ho: My humble Dutie vnto yo'r lo: moste humblie remembred. May it please the same to be remembred, That lyke as before I adu'tized yo'r ho: of the Arryvall heere of 900 souldiers, p'cell of the 1000 men appoynted hither for Ireland by yo'r llo': dyrection, and of the Dep'ture hence over into Ireland of 600 of them, and that 300 out of the Welsh shieres, p'cell of the nomber of 400 thence appoynted, vnder the Conducc'on of Captaine Skipwith, were here ready alsoe; and that the Captaine, because the 100 men levyed in the County of Carn'von were not then Come, would not send away the rest. Soe doe I nowe adu'tyze yo'r Lo: that the said 100 out of Carn'vonshere are latelie come hither; who, with the other

300 men, in all 400, are as yet remaining heere vnder the Conduction of the said Captaine for want of Wynde, to her Ma'ts great Charge. Albeit, yf the Captaine would haue bene p'swaded by me, the said 300 men had bene in Ireland with the reste, but I Could not prevayle w'th him therein. The Charges in Dyet by Sea and Land of the said 1000 men is great, and freight for their transportation alsoe is expected; wherefore I humblie beseche yo'r ho: to vouchsafe to geue speedy dyrection, that some imprest of money may be hither sent towards the diffraying of the said Charges; and that yf it might stand w'th yo'r Lo: good pleasure, that the same might be had for more readynes out of her Ma'ts treasure now come hither for Ireland. Thus praying god to pres'rve yo'r lo: to Whose blessed tuic'on Doe the same most humblie Comitt. Yor lo: most bounden.'

From another of the documents of the period we catch a glimpse of Liverpool commencing to share with Chester that fame as a port which in later years it has entirely monopolised. This document, the body of which it is unnecessary to quote, is headed: 'Instructions given to James Ware, gent., being sent Downe to the Portes of Chester and Liverpool to provyde and set the Shippinge of Cth horse and vj Cth foote that are appoynted to be embarqued at that porte.' The soldiers were turbulent and difficult to manage; their state of discipline was not high; and, in order to protect the townsfolk from their strifes, the mayors had from time to time to take strong measures. Thus the mayoralty of Foulk Aldersey, 1594, was 'full of troubles, for here was manye souldiers, about 1500, who dailly fought and quarrelled that the cittyzens were often raysed; especially

at once beinge all up upon uproare from the Eastgate to the Barres, the Mayor, like a worthye stowte man, appeased by proclamation the tumulte and soughte oute the originall quarellers and sent them to prison, and caused a gibet to be sett up at the Hie Crosse for to execute marshall lawe and three souldiers to be brougte in sighte of all the reste of theire fellowes, and one had a halter upon the lathes aboute his necke, and by entreatye of capteyn and other gentlemen they were saved.'

In the reign of James, as already mentioned, the hunting down of recusants was prosecuted with great activity, particularly by three men of the name of Glasier, who occupied positions of importance in connection with the city, one having been mayor and another vice-chamberlain. James visited Chester in 1617, on his way home from Edinburgh, and was received with ceremony. 'After a learned speech delivered by the Recorder Edward Whitby, the Mayor Charles Fitton presented to the King a fair standing cup with a cover, double gilt, and therein an hundred jacobins of gold; and likewise the Mayor delivered the city's sword to the King, who gave it to the Mayor again. And the same was borne before the King by the Mayor, being on horseback. The sword of state was borne by the right honourable William, Earl of Derby, Chamberlain of the County Palatine of Chester. The King rode first to the Minster, where he alighted from his horse, and in the west aisle of the church he heard an oration delivered in Latin by a scholar of the free school; after which he went into the choir. And there in a seat made for the King, in the higher end of the choir, he heard an anthem sung. After certain prayers, the King went from thence to the Pentice, where a sumptuous

banquet was prepared at the City's cost, which being ended, the King departed to the Vale Royal. At his departure the order of knighthood was offered to Mr. Mayor, but he refused the same.'

The reign of Charles I. was full of stir for the city. The first event of importance to be mentioned was the passage through of Prynne, who had just been before the Star Chamber, where he had been sentenced to a fine of £5000, to be expelled from his University, from Lincoln's Inn and from the law, and to stand twice in the pillory, losing an ear on each occasion. In 1637 he passed through Chester on his way to Carnarvon Castle, where he was to be imprisoned for life. The occasion was taken by many, who shared his political views, to meet him and show their sympathy with him and the cause which he represented. A severe punishment awaited some of these sympathisers. Ormerod says that 'he was met on his approach to Chester by numbers of the puritanical faction who expressed the greatest veneration for him, and so conducted themselves as to incur the marked displeasure of the government. Some were fined £500, some £300, and others £250. Mr. Peter Ince, a stationer and one of the offenders, made a public recantation before the bishop in the Cathedral, as did Calvin Bruen, of Stapleford, in the town hall. Two of the others, Mr. Peter Lee, and Mr. Richard Golborne, suffered their bonds of £300 each to be estreated into the exchequer, rather than perform the conditions. In the following year four portraits of Prynne, painted in Chester, were burnt at the High Cross in presence of the magistracy.' The great event however of this reign was the Civil War, and in that conflict Chester played a large part. So far as the city was concerned the first events in connec-

tion with the struggle took place a fortnight before Charles unfurled his standard at Nottingham, when Sir William Brereton, who lived at Nun's Hall, near the castle, an active politician, who had twice represented the county in Parliament, started recruiting in the city for the Parliamentary side, with trumpet and drum. The alarm-bell was rung and the mayor, after a struggle, put a stop to the proceedings. In the same year, 1642, the king himself visited Chester, having sent before him, from Stafford, where his court was then stationed, a letter ordering the civic authorities to prepare for his coming and to meet him on his arrival at the city. On the 23rd of September he made his entry, and at once issued instructions to the mayor and aldermen 'to search the seuerall Houses of S'r William Brereton, Baronett, William Edwards, Alderman, and Thomas Aldersey, Alderman, the Red Lyon and the Golden Lyon, scituate in Our sayd Citty, Wherein you or euery of you shall suspect to bee any Armes or Amunition intended to be vsed against vs, or against any Our louing subjects: And all such Armes and Amunition that you or euery of you shall find vpon yo'r sayd search to seize and take into yo'r Custodies for the vse of vs, to be disposed of as Wee shall appoint.' Five days later the king took his leave, having received a present of two hundred pounds, with another hundred for the Prince of Wales. On his departure steps were taken to put the fortifications of the city into a state of preparation to resist the attack which was threatened. Batteries were erected which extended from the city walls, near Pemberton's Parlour, to Stone Bridge, and from thence to Flookersbrook, where the railway station now stands, and across to Boughton, reaching the river at Boughton

Fords. Sir Nicholas Byron had been appointed governor and colonel-general, and a force of three

PEMBERTON'S PARLOUR

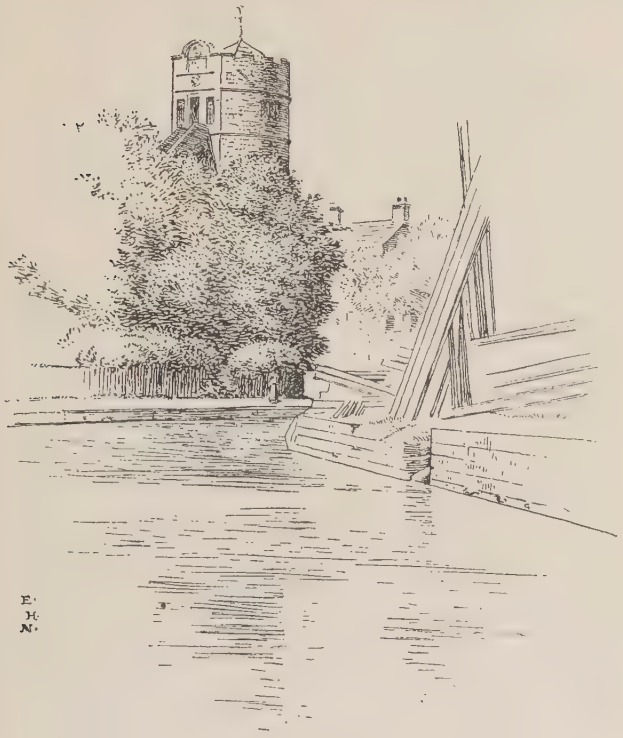
hundred citizens was enrolled, armed, and trained at the expense of the city. Sir William Brereton appeared before the outworks which had been raised, on July 16th, 1643, but being repulsed with considerable loss, withdrew to Hawarden. This castle, whose modern neighbour was afterwards to become

well known as the home of Mr. Gladstone, was already occupied by Parliamentarian troops, and from its position was able to be a source of considerable inconvenience to Chester by stopping the supply of coals and provisions from that district. It was, however, shortly afterwards reduced by soldiers coming from Ireland, assisted by the train-bands of Chester, and was subsequently held by the Royalists. The important position of Beeston Castle met a similar fate, so that two of the most powerful fortresses in the vicinity of Chester were now in the hands of those friendly to the king. In 1644 Lord Byron succeeded in obtaining the surrender of Northwich, which had been the headquarters of Brereton and the Parliamentary forces; but he failed in a similar attempt upon Nantwich, which remained the only place in the neighbourhood in the hands of the rebels. After a vain attempt to seize Nantwich, Byron retired to Chester, being closely followed by Brereton and his soldiers. Prince Rupert, and after him Prince Maurice, appeared in Chester, and the latter ordered that a Protestation declaring 'that the Earl of Essex, Sir William Brereton, and Sir Thomas Middleton, and all their party and adherents, are in actual rebellion against the King,' and promising to aid the king's cause, should be taken by all the inhabitants of the city. It ended with the statement, 'And I do likewise, from my soul, abhor the taking of the damnable and late-invented covenant, commonly called the national covenant, impressed by the rebels upon many of his Majesty's subjects: And to all this I have protested, I call God to witness, believing I cannot be absolved by any power, mental reservation, or equivocation, from this my vow and protestation.' On the 19th of September 1644, Colonel Jones and

Adjutant-General Louthian, who had failed in their attempt to reduce Beeston Castle, made a sudden attack upon Chester, which was so far successful that parts of the city outside the walls, including the mayor's house, were seized, and the city sword and mace were captured and sent up as trophies to Speaker Lenthall. The citizens, now shut up within their walls, were reduced to great straits, and much correspondence passed between besiegers and besieged with respect to capitulation.

After a time the generals who had been conducting the siege were called elsewhere, and the command was taken up by Sir William Brereton, who proceeded to hem the city in on every side. In the next year, after the fatal battle of Naseby, the king made his way to Chirk and thence proceeded to attempt the relief of Chester. Sir Marmaduke Langdale, the commander of the Royalist horse, crossed the Dee at Holt, entering Cheshire apparently with the idea of attacking the besiegers in the rear. At the same time Charles made his way to Chester, entering it by the old bridge over the Dee. He was received with every sign of affection and was quartered at the house of Sir Francis Gamull, in Lower Bridge Street. Unless one considers that the Parliamentary leaders deliberately permitted the king to enter the city for their own purposes, it seems difficult to understand how, invested as the city was, it would have been possible for him to have got within the walls save after a hotly contested battle. On the 24th September was fought the battle of Rowton Moor, at which the Royalist forces were completely defeated. The king watched the progress of the conflict partly from the tower of the cathedral, but chiefly from the Phœnix Tower, which stands at the north-east corner of the

walls and from this event is sometimes called King Charles's Tower. On the next day, after having agreed



PHŒNIX TOWER

with Lord Byron 'that if after ten days, they saw no reasonable prospect of relief, they were to treat for their own preservation,' the king, with a body-guard of five hundred troops, retired once more over

the Dee Bridge into North Wales. In the days following his departure further fierce attempts were made by the besiegers to carry the city by assault, but the gallant garrison repulsed each effort. It was not until the end of January in the next year that the garrison, who had been by this time reduced to the greatest straits and were living upon horses, dogs, and such other animals as were to be found within the walls, approached the besiegers with a view to capitulation. After six days' negotiations, Articles of Surrender were agreed upon, though the mayor, Charles Walley, and Sir Francis Gamull with four companions dissented from them. The ten days agreed upon with the king had expanded themselves into eighteen weeks, before the garrison surrendered, and then their capitulation was permitted upon most honourable terms. After the reduction of the city the High Cross, which had so far been spared, seems to have been destroyed by the Parliamentarians. There is amongst the Harleian MS. a rough figure of this cross by Randle Holme, which shows it to have been surmounted by a large head, consisting of a lower row of figures in niches, with a second row of smaller figures above. On the top was an orb surmounted by a cross. The upper portion of this cross is now in the Grosvenor Museum. It is obvious that a siege so protracted and accompanied by so many fierce assaults could not have taken place without much destruction of buildings and property. A list of the principal losses, drawn up by Randle Holme, is extant, and concludes with the following passage: 'The drawing dry of the cittie's stocks, plate, rentes, and collections, not knowne, all which losses, charges and demolishments, in opinion of most, will amount to two hundred

thousand pounds att the least, so farr hath the God of heaven humbled this famous cittie, and note here, that if Jerusalem, the particular beloved cittie of God, of which it is said in sacred writ, "mark well her bulwarks, and count her towers," in man's judgement invincible; yet her sinne provoked God soe, that he leaved not a stone upon another; this may be an advertisement to us, that God's mercy is yett to be found, since he hath left us soe many streets, lanes, and churches, yet unmolested. God grant us faith, patience, and true repentance and amendment, that a worse danger befall us not.—Amen.' Neither is it surprising that the plague, which had before visited the city, should once more have made its appearance. It was in 1648 that this took place, when we are told that 'the plague broke out in Chester and raged so violently that upwards of two thousand persons died of it, and that the City became so deserted that grass grew in the streets at the High Cross.' After the downfall of the king's cause a further 'Ingagement,' the effect of which was that he who took it pledged himself 'to serve the Commonwealth without King or Lords,' was ordered to be administered to the inhabitants. According to a letter still preserved in the *Domestic State Papers*, from John Bradshaw, the regicide, then Chief Justice of Chester,[1] to Sergeant Bradshaw, President of the Council of State, this 'Ingagement' was not very popular; in fact, the writer states, '(to give yo'r Lor'pp the whole truth, which is my duty) not one Justice of the Peace within the Citty—Mayor, Recorder, or other excepte Mr. Aldersey and myselfe, —have either taken the Ingagement, or given Countenance to them that have or woulde.' The reason

[1] See p. 254.

for this non-compliance with the orders of Parliament, which is not that which would naturally suggest itself, is given in the same letter. 'The reason, I conceive, of the People's backwardness heere is cheifely the frequent deterringe arguments from Pulpitts, whence the riggid Presbyterians shake the unstable myndes of men, settinge the Ingagement directly in opposition to the Covenant, chargeing Covenant-breaking and Perjury upon all that have subscribed, to the reall scandall of many; labouringe to render them odious to the people, and yet all is wooven so cunningly, as the thread appears not wherewith to bind up such zealots.' From which it appears that the designers of the Covenant were being hoist with their own petard. In 1651 a Council of War assembled for the purpose of trying prisoners who were charged under the Act of Parliament which made it treason to correspond with Charles Stuart or his party. This Court, which was presided over by Colonel Mackworth, condemned to death the Earl of Derby, Sir Timothy Featherstonehaugh, and Captain John Benbow. The first of these made a bold attempt to escape from Chester Castle, but it was unfortunately unsuccessful, and the earl was taken from Stanley Palace (see p. 245) to Bolton where he was executed. Sir Timothy met his death in the market-place of Chester at the hands of the public executioner. After the Restoration an address was presented to Charles II., in which the civic authorities plume themselves on 'having never tempo(r)ized w'th any irregular power, by any Addresse made to them: since ye death of your most Royall Father, and our most gratious Soveraigne of Glorious memory.' During this reign James, Duke of Monmouth, the natural son of the king, visited Chester, according

to the Cowper MS.: 'Greatly affecting popularity, and giving countenance to riotous assemblies and tumultuous mobs, whose violence was such as to pelt with stones the windows of several gentlemen's houses in the City and likewise to damage the same. They likewise furiously forced the doors of the Cathedral church, and destroyed most of the painted glass, burst open the little vestries and cupboards wherein were the surplices and hoods belonging to the clergy, which they rent to rags and carried away; they beat to pieces the baptismal font, pulled down some monuments, attempted to demolish the organ, and committed other enormous outrages. . . . On Thursday the twenty-fifth of the same month (August) the Duke went to the horse-races at Wallasey in Wirral, which meeting served as a rendezvous for his friends in this part of the kingdom, a junto of whom sat in consultation in the summer-house at Bidston, where was concerted that insurrection which was afterwards attended with such fatal consequences.' It is also related that the duke was his own jockey at the Wallasey races, that he won the plate, and the same evening presented it to the Mayor of Chester for his infant daughter, whose godfather he had become on the previous day.

Chester under later Sovereigns

James II., in the course of a progress through the kingdom, visited Chester in 1687, and was entertained by the civic authorities at the Pentice. From the Cowper MS. we learn that 'His Majesty lodged at the Bishop's palace, from whence next morning he walked through the city to the Castle (the mayor bareheaded carrying the sword before him), and heard Mass in the Shire-Hall. On Monday he went to Holywell, and on Tuesday returned to Chester, and the day following closetted several gentlemen, both

of the city and county, in order to prevail upon them to approve of the repeal of the penal laws and test-act, but met with very little encouragement in that affair. On Thursday, Sept. 1st, the King left, not much satisfied with the disposition of the people.' Amongst the important inhabitants of the city 'closetted' by the king was the Rev. Matthew Henry,[1] then a minister at one of the chapels. The king privately proposed to him that he should nominate 'safe' men as members of the city council and of the magistracy, but this offer was declined. An account of the interview, in Henry's own handwriting, is still to be seen in the books of the chapel. Three years later, the man who had meanwhile dispossessed James of his throne also visited Chester on his way to Ireland. William III. made his way from Combermere by Peel Hall, and arrived in the city on Sunday morning, the 4th of June. He went immediately to the cathedral, where he was seated on the episcopal throne, and heard divine service and a sermon preached by Dr. Stratford, then bishop of the diocese. From thence he went to Gayton Hall, in Wirral, and so to Ireland.

Chester was used as a place of imprisonment for some of those made captives during 'the '15,' though the insurrection itself did not touch the city. The Cowper MS., from which I have already drawn so largely, states that 'this winter Lord Charles Murray (son to the Duke of Athol), with several gentlemen, and a great number of private men, who had been taken (Nov. 13) in the rebellion at Preston, were brought prisoners to Chester Castle. The weather was very severe, and the snow lay a yard deep in the roads. Many of the above-mentioned prisoners died

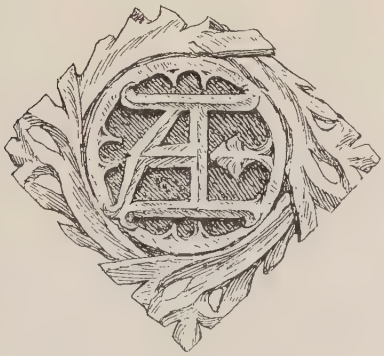
[1] See p. 258.

in the Castle by the severity of the season, many were carried off by a very malignant fever, and most of the survivors were transported to the plantations in America.' During 'the '45' Chester fully expected to have once more to defend itself against a besieging foe. When it was known that Prince Charles's army had reached Manchester, great preparations were made in the city. The Watergate, the Northgate, and the Sally-Port were all walled up, in order to lessen the danger of an attack, and some of the buildings exterior to, but abutting upon the wall, which might have afforded protection to an enemy, were pulled down. Stores and ammunition were taken in, and the city in every way made ready for the attack which never came. The invading forces passed through part of the county and through the neighbouring county of Stafford, but never came near the city. Once more, however, it served as a place of imprisonment; for, after the surrender of Carlisle, sixteen cart-loads of captives were brought to Chester and immured in the castle, which they completely filled.

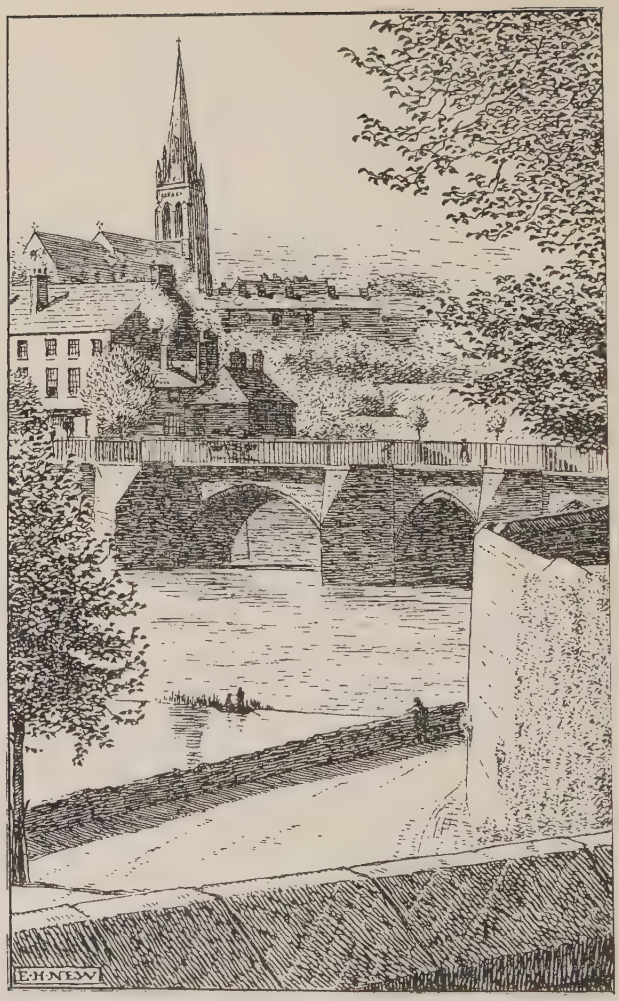
In 1782 the fear of foreign enemies led to the enrolment of a body of volunteers, at the call of the then mayor, Mr. Pattison Ellames. A number of extracts from the order-book of this corps have been published in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, from which it appears that there were 54 volunteers present and voting at a parade, when it was arranged to arm the corps with muskets made by a local manufacturer rather than with the Tower weapon. The cross-belts and cartouch-boxes were obtained from Birmingham. Much of the correspondence which has been published deals with the delays made by the War Office in responding to what appear to have been perfectly reasonable requests

on the part of those responsible for the affairs of the corps. In 1803 there was a further enrolment of volunteers. According to Hemingway's *History of Chester*, on the occasion of the public meeting called for this purpose, 'the hall was filled to excess, all ranks pressing forward to place themselves amongst the defenders of their country; and in the course of a few days the Chester Volunteers numbered upwards of 1300 effective men, who daily subjected themselves to a regular course of drill.' It does not appear that either of these bodies of volunteers ever took part in any kind of service; but another body, this time of cavalry, which went by the name of the 'Ancient Britons,' and contained many Chester men amongst its ranks, was raised in 1797 and sent to Ireland. One of the historians of Chester says that they 'did good service' there; but Irish historians have taken another, and perhaps less incorrect, view of their operations in that distressful country. From the sister island emanated the last attempt upon Chester to be commemorated in this chapter, and that no further back than 1867. At that time the Fenian conspiracy had assumed considerable dimensions, and there are said to have been no less than between four and five thousand Irishmen in Chester cognisant with and subscribing to the movement. The castle contained thirty thousand stand of arms and a million rounds of ball-cartridge. In addition to this, one thousand rifles belonging to the volunteers were kept in a building called the Old Cockpit. The latter were quite unprotected; the former were guarded only by fifty soldiers. The scheme was to seize the castle and arms, and one Captain John M'Cafferty was the director of the movement. The inevitable informant, however, in the person of a man named Corydon,

appeared upon the scene; and when the conspirators arrived they found the castle and its arms in possession of the volunteers. Thus ended the last attempt to let slip the dogs of war in the ancient city of Chester.



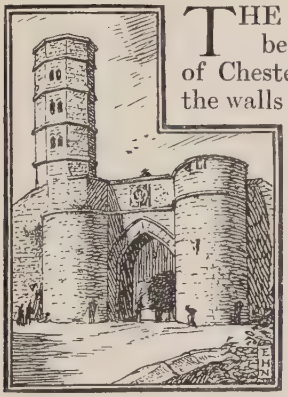
BOSS IN THE ROOF OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH



OLD BRIDGE AND ST. MARY'S WITHOUT THE WALLS

CHAPTER IV

THE WALLS—THE BRIDGE AND MILLS



OLD BRIDGE GATE

THE material objects which have been associated with the history of Chester from its earliest period are the walls and the fortress, which, under one name or another, has dominated the position perhaps from even an earlier date than the foundation of Roman Deva. These two portions of our subject, with certain other objects closely connected with them, will therefore form the theme of this and the succeeding chapter. The date of the erection of the walls of the city, as we now find them, has been a fruitful subject of discussion, and those who wish to inform themselves upon it to a larger extent than it will be possible for them to do in the following lines, will do well to study the opening address of the winter session of 1887 of the British Archæological Association, delivered by Sir J. A. Picton, and the

volume of the *Journal* of the Chester Archæological and Historic Society for the following year (new series, vol. ii.). In the latter especially will be found an elaborate discussion of the subject. Without going deeply into details, it may be said that parts at least of the north and east walls are almost, without a doubt, of actual Roman construction. Mr. Brock, dealing with the north wall, where the most important proofs of Roman construction have been found, says that when the walls are examined the first impression on the spectator's mind is that by far the largest portions visible are of mediæval date, with evidences of many repairs. The wall, he proceeds, is none too well built, the masonry is for the most part of inferior stone, the work irregular, and the patches where repairs have been effected are frequent. Standing on the north bank, and looking at the north wall, six or more repairs are visible in the space between the more solid base and the parapet. The singular custom of ignoring the natural bed of the stone seems to have been very general, and the result is that some of the latest executed portions appear to be the most decayed. It is, however, as he remarks, the more solid basal part of the wall which requires especial study, and on this part, as laid bare by excavations in a portion of the course of the northern wall, he makes the following remarks: 'It will be noticed that the wall is constructed of large ashlar stones laid in courses, solid from face to face, except where the upright joints do not touch, and these are filled with percolated earth. The beds of the stones are truly worked, very even and neat, and there is no mortar, except that the rock base has been prepared by a layer of mortar laid upon it. The courses are of varying heights, and the beds of the stones are laid

fairly horizontally, with a tendency to follow the undulating nature of the rock on which the wall is built. There is a chamfered plinth now buried beneath accumulated earth. The stones are neatly worked to a face in front, still perfect, but there is no face behind, for the stones end irregularly, some projecting beyond the others. This shows conclusively enough that the inner face was never worked fair to be seen. It is (at the point under description) backed up on the city side by a bank of earth, which accounts for the uneven nature of the work, and we may conclude that this bank is part of the original construction. Above the plinth of three courses the wall rises to the height of seventeen courses of the construction already named. There is then a rounded set-off, and above this there is a change in the mode of building. Partly on the massive wall of masonry and partly on the earthen bank, with no sort of foundation except what the wall gives, with no extra footings or projecting course on the city side, rises the poorly built wall. Mark the difference of its construction. It has an inner and an outer face of rough squared stones, not in all cases laid horizontally, but in most cases laid at random, the space between the two faces being filled in with rubble, after the style of all the mediæval walls of Chester. It is built with mortar not over good. It is in and with work of this nature that the repairs visible from a distance have been effected.' It is in the basal part of the wall that the Roman tombstones have been found to which allusion was made in the first chapter, and it is this part of the wall which it is thought may be safely assigned to the Roman period. It has been suggested that the upper courses of the wall are really the older, and that the better lower part is a construction of later

The Walls—the Bridge and Mills

date, the upper part having been underbuilt. Mr. Brock, however, does not think that this argument can hold water, and considers that we may safely attribute those portions of the wall which are formed of unmortared stones—and, by the way, there is no other example of this peculiar kind of building construction on anything like the same scale of magnitude elsewhere in England—or those portions which are constructed of large stones, to Roman builders. It should be remembered that this kind of construction has only been found in the north and east walls. We have no knowledge of where the west and south walls of Deva lay. Perhaps, some think, there was no Roman wall on the west side of Deva. Sir J. A. Picton thinks that the building of the Water Tower, with its fortified curtain wall, alone is a proof that there was no Roman bulwark on this side of the city. 'If,' he says, 'there had been a wall at that time running along the margin of the estuary, there would have been no need of this flank protection any more than on the three remaining sides of the city. We must remember that in the time of the Romans, and during centuries afterwards, as is manifest by the old coast-line which runs many miles round, the Roodeye was an open sea where large ships could ride. Under the furthest gasometer of those now standing on the Roodeye, and at a depth of twenty-seven feet, was found a pig of lead, marked Deceangl, which had evidently fallen out of a ship. Some idea of the depth of the water at this point can be gathered from the fact just narrated. The Roman cities under these circumstances never built walls along their sea or river fronts. Richborough and Pevensey, with massive defences on the three land sides, left the sea fronts open. London, in early Roman times, though forti-

fied on the three landward sides, was open to the river, and had no wall on that side until the building of the bridge required protection. Rome itself, during the long lapse of ages, never built any walls along the banks of the Tiber. It may, I think, fairly be inferred,' he concludes, 'that in Roman times, and for a long period afterwards, there was no wall along the bank of the estuary, now the Roodeye.' There is, however, a large mass of masonry on the lower level of the Roodeye to be accounted for. This may have been a quay or platform for the discharge of merchandise, since Watkin and Shrubsole have brought forward evidence to prove that there was formerly a creek or inlet, which debouched into the estuary about the north end of the line of this masonry, and was about 119 yards wide at its mouth, with a considerable depth of water. Moreover, in the map of 1653, given in King's *Vale Royal*, there is represented a platform at this particular spot. It possesses returns at each end, and measures by scale two hundred paces. This can still be traced for 134 feet, beyond which it is covered by soil and buildings. Sir J. Picton thought that this mass of masonry was the Roman wharf, as no doubt it was, but he also assumed that Chester in the time of the Romans was a prosperous commercial port, having a considerable export and import trade. This view seems to be conclusively negatived, however, by Mr. Haverfield's exposition of the purely military nature of Deva. As to the remainder, and greater part, of the walls of Chester, these seem to be mainly of Edwardian date, though work of the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries is also to be traced. It is clear, from what has been stated in a previous chapter concerning the remains of the Roman Wall in St. John's Street, that much,

The Walls—the Bridge and Mills

if not all, of the present east wall must be purely and entirely post-Roman, not even built on the Roman footing, but within the limits of the walls of Deva. Mr. Brock points out that one of the re-worked stones of the north wall, which was probably originally of Roman date, has a very distinct mason's mark, which he believes to be of Edwardian date. Of course the walls have undergone considerable repairs at later dates as a result of, or as a preparation for, the various assaults which they have been called upon to repel. It is obvious that the necessary repairs to walls of such importance, and forming a circuit of two miles, must have required a considerable amount of attention and the expenditure of a good deal of money. At times both care and coin seem to have been spared, the walls becoming almost ruinous, as they must have been when, as detailed in Chapter II., Lokkes could steal away a number of the stones for his own purposes. A grant was made (14 Edw. II.) for murage, a term which was used, whether originally so intended or not, to cover the paving of the streets as well as the repair of the walls. The grant, which was for two years, was 'for every cranock of all kinds of corn, a halfpenny: of all meal and malt, a farthing; and for what was not in the same grant expressed, there should be paid for the value of every two shillings, one farthing—that is, twopence-halfpenny in the pound' (Webb). The expenditure of this money on the objects for which it was designed was placed in the hands of persons called here, as at Oswestry, 'Murengers.' The duties of these officers seem to have been continued down to a late date, for Hemingway says of them: 'The duties of the Murengers were formerly of considerable extent and importance, and consisted in collecting the customs on imports, which were

appropriated to the repairs of the city walls. The appointment of these officers is continued annually, but this source of revenue is almost entirely dried up. So long as the direct importation of Irish linens to this port was continued, an adequate sum was raised for this purpose, but that trade has long since been diverted into other channels, and with its disappearance the revenue has failed.'

The Walls—the Bridge and Mills

The walls, as above mentioned, have a circumference of about two miles, and were penetrated by a number of gateways, the more important of which were held in sergeantry by different families or persons, as will be more particularly mentioned when each is dealt with. It is still possible to walk round the entire circuit of the walls, and indeed this is one of the things which no visitor to Chester should neglect to do. Not merely from their intrinsic interest, but from the views of the city and its houses and of the country in its neighbourhood to be obtained from them, the walk round the walls is one of peculiar interest. It is generally commenced at the East Gate, which is that nearest to the station, by ascending the steps on the north or cathedral side of that entrance. The existing gateway was erected in 1769 by the Lord Grosvenor of the period. Pennant describes that which it succeeds as consisting of 'two arches much hid by a tower erected over it in later days. When the modern case of Norman masonry,' he continues, 'was taken down, the Roman appeared in full view. It consisted of two arches formed of vast stone, fronting Eastgate Street and Forest (Foregate) Street; the pillars between them dividing them exactly in two, with the figure of a Roman soldier between the arches facing Forest Street.' The sergeantcy of this gate was given to Henry de Brad-

ford by Edward I. in exchange for lands elsewhere. Subsequently the rights passed into other hands, and eventually through those of the de Veres into the possession of Randulph Crewe, and thus into the family of the earls of that name. The keepers of this gate had the inspection of weights and measures, and were bound to keep a crannock and a bushel for measuring salt. A large number of articles paid toll here. Ascending the wall on the north of this gate, and walking towards the cathedral, of which and of the burying-ground surrounding it a good view is to be obtained, the next gate, which stands at the end of the Abbey Street, and is called the Kale-Yard Gate, will be reached. This gate, which is only a postern, and much smaller than the main entrances of the city, was made for the convenience of the monks when visiting their kitchen- or kale-garden, a spot now covered by a school and a timber-yard. It seems that the monks must have made a larger gateway than they were entitled to, and have taken less care in guarding it than was considered necessary, for according to a covenant in the Public Record Office, London, a settlement had to be arrived at in the reign of Edward II. This covenant is thus calendered: '16 Edward II. Chester.—Dissensions having arisen between the Abbot and Convent of Chester, and the Mayor and Commonalty of the city, touching the closing of the postern of the said abbey, in the wall of the city contiguous to the abbey; it was covenanted, that the said Abbot and Convent and their successors should hold the said postern closed in time of peace, on conditions that they made a drawbridge across the ditch in the gardens of the said abbey, and supported the same bridge, and took such measures for the security of the city, as they should deem fit, by the

custody of the keys, and drawing the said bridge; and that they destroyed the great gate erected by them in their own proper wall, and kept the place closed; in lieu of which the said Mayor and Commonalty were to permit the said Abbot to make another postern in the place outside the walls of the convent in which the swinesty was accustomed to be, the said door to be of such dimensions that a man on foot might lead a horse through without difficulty, the same to be closed in time of war, should the safety of the city require it.' Still later, in the second year of Henry v., the abbot obtained a licence to close two small gates, he representing that the public had access by them to the gardens of the monastery, where they did much damage. One of these gates is that under consideration. Beyond this gateway was Sadler's Tower, one of several bastions which have disappeared. This particular tower was taken down in 1780, a period when a good deal of destruction, under the guise of restoration and improvement, was effected. The projecting part of the wall on which the tower stood was removed in 1828. One of the most important of the existing towers is the next object to be reached, 'Newton's Tower,' or as it is now generally called, from the device of the Painters' and Stationers' Company which is carved upon its south wall, the 'Phœnix Tower' (see fig. p. 61). This is the tower from which King Charles I. is said to have witnessed the defeat of his forces on Rowton Moor, an occurrence which, it will be noticed, is commemorated by an inscription. It was let, like others of the towers, to one of the trading guilds of the city for the purposes of their meetings, the body in question being that whose device decorates the tower. It is now a sort of a small museum. The visitor should not omit to

notice the fine view of the country lying around Chester, and particularly of the objects associated with the struggle between the Royalist and Parliamentary troops, which is to be obtained from this point. Under the walls at this point is the canal, occupying the position of the ancient fosse of the city. The next object to be reached is the North Gate, one of the important means of entry to the city, always under the custody of the mayor and citizens. According to an inquisition of 1321, they had the right to claim the tolls exacted at the gate, but in return they were required to watch it and also the prisoners there confined by the earl. There was a building over the old gate,[1] which was used as the gaol, and in addition to taking charge of this the civic authorities had to keep the key of the gallows and be responsible for the hanging of criminals and the carrying out of the punishment of the pillory upon those condemned to it. All prisoners confined for felony had to pay fourpence to the keeper of the prison if they remained in it for more than one night, but no charge was made in the case of prisoners for debt, recovery, or simple trespass. The old gate was removed in 1808, and 'consisted of a dark, narrow, and inconvenient passage, under a pointed arch, over which was a mean and ruinous gaol, the "Franche-house" or "Freehouse."' The late Mr. William Denson, who was born in 1800, stated that a tall load of hay would not pass through under the arch. Toll was still in his day demanded for anything brought in or taken out of the city which could not be carried in the hand. If this toll was refused, the keeper of the gate was authorised to take the bridle off the horse. Mr. Denson saw the last toll exacted

[1] See p. 24.

in this way, and, as it resulted in the horse running away and causing some mischief, the custom was abolished. It had a postern on the east, the entrance to the gaol being on the west. Under the gateway was a horrible dungeon, to which the only access of air was through pipes (Morris). When the gate thus described was taken down, the present edifice, an arch in the Doric style, was erected at the cost of Earl Grosvenor. It will be noticed that the canal, near the North Gate, is crossed by two bridges, the smaller of which has a rather curious history. The Act for connecting Chester with Nantwich by means of a canal was passed in 1771, and it was then intended that the course of the cutting should be somewhat to the north of that which it actually occupies. Before work was commenced, however, the Corporation decided to adopt the present line, which they were entitled by the Act to choose if so disposed. The contractor, who imagined that in either case he would have to cut, at great expense, through a sandstone rock, made no demur, but when the work came to be carried out, it was found that the line of the canal was that of the old city fosse, and that, consequently, instead of cutting through rock, all that had to be done was to clear the fosse of the earth with which it had been filled up. One result of this was the making of a handsome fortune by the contractor. Another was that the Northgate Gaol was cut off from the Chapel of the Hospital of St. John, where the prisoners had been in the habit of attending divine service. For some time the chaplain held services in the gaol itself, but as this was an inconvenient arrangement, the small bridge was constructed at a cost of £20. This little bridge is sometimes called the 'Bridge of Death' or 'Bridge

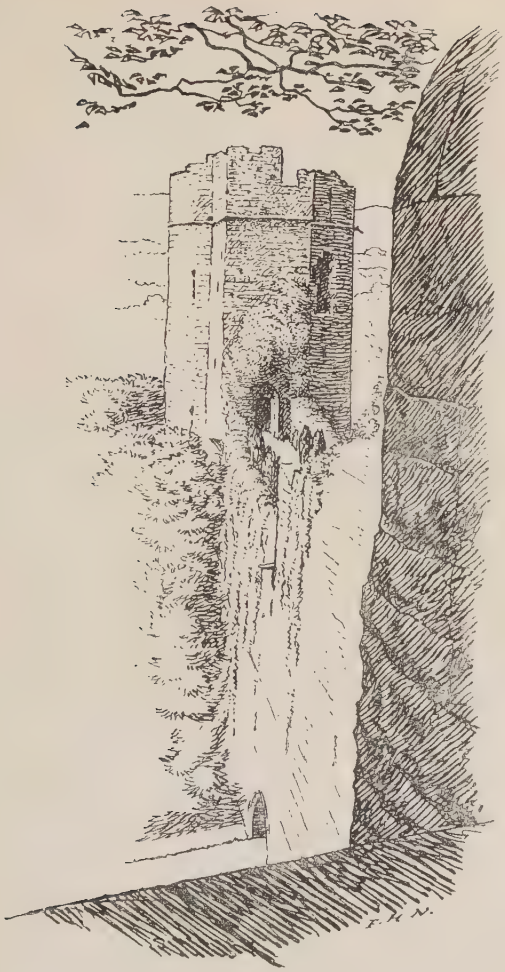
of Sighs,' since the condemned prisoners passed over it from their last attendance upon a religious service

Morgan's Mount

to the place of their execution. The purpose of the bridge came to an end in 1708, when the City Gaol, near the Infirmary, came into use, but the causeway still remains. The next object to be reached is a

watch-tower called 'Morgan's Mount,' which possesses a lower chamber at the same level as that of the footway along the wall, and an upper platform, from which a fine view, including the Welsh mountains, may be obtained. There was a very important battery on the top of this tower during the siege of the city. The next tower is known as 'Pemberton's Parlour' (see fig. p. 58), from one John Pemberton, a ropemaker, who in 1700 established a ropewalk within the walls, between King Street and the Water Tower. He is said to have sat in this tower watching his men at work below, hence its present name. In earlier days it was called the 'Goblin's Tower,' and also 'Dilles Tower.' In the Harleian MS. it is stated that 'the Smyths for a place to sett their carriage,' *i.e.* the movable stage on which mysteries were performed, 'adjoining to the Shermen under the Walles nigh unto a towre called the "Dilles Towre," paid the Weavers the comparatively large sum of iiijs. yearly.' Pemberton's Parlour is semicircular in shape, and may always have been of this construction, though some have thought that it was once a circular tower with a passage through it—a not very probable conjecture. In 1720, owing to its ruinous condition, a large part of this tower had to be taken down, the remainder being repaired. An inscription on the city side tells us that 'In the seventh year of the glorious reign of Queen Anne, divers large breaches in these Walls were rebuilt and other decays therein were repaired, two thousands yards of the pace were new flagged or paved, and the whole improved, regulated, and adorned at the expense of one thousand pounds and upwards.' To this statement is added the names of the mayors from 1701 to 1708 inclusive, with that of the Recorder and the Muren-

gers, all of whom were aldermen of the city. Some years ago, owing to the vibration of the trains, the Pemberton's Parlour thus rebuilt, became insecure, and was entirely rebuilt. The inscriptions and arms were, however, replaced above the entrance. Beyond this tower and on the left is a tract of ground still called 'Barrow Field,' said to have been the exercise ground for the soldiers of Deva, and also the place of interment of the citizens who died in the plague. When excavations were being made here in connection with a visit of the Royal Agricultural Society, about the middle of the last century, some Roman graves and other objects belonging to the same period were found. Beyond this are two towers connected by a curtain wall. The higher of these is called 'Bonewaldesthorne's Tower,' 'turris de Benewaldesthorn,' as it is called in an old indenture. The lower building is the 'New' or 'Water' Tower, which in spite of its first name was originally built in the reign of Edward II., a sum of £100 being paid for that purpose to John de Helpeston, a mason. He contracted to erect a round tower, 10½ ells thick and 24 ells high, with a connecting wall 8 ells in length and 4 ells in thickness, with battlements. The second name of this tower reminds us that when it was built the waters of the Dee actually came up to the wall at this point; indeed, it is not so long ago that the rings attached to the tower for mooring ships were still to be seen. The great meadow, known as the Roodeye, which is encircled by the waters of the Dee, and is famous as the racecourse of the city, was at a previous period part of the bed of the river; in fact, in 1401, it was decided that it could not be tithed by the rector of Trinity Church because it was land recovered from the sea. In the twenty-ninth



THE WATER TOWER

year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth this piece of ground was leased to Thomas Lyniall, merchant, the spot being 'of late greatly decaied and impaired and likely to be more wasted.' He was to be permitted to embank as much land as he could and to take twopence for each boat coming in and out, in consideration of building a quay and paying £20 per annum. The citizens were not much pleased at this arrangement, and had to be reprimanded by Sir Francis Walsingham. The first part of the name of this piece of ground was derived from the fact that a rood once stood there. The stump of the cross, after the removal of the upper part, remained *in situ* for some time. It was subsequently removed also, but has recently been restored to its original position. The terminal syllable, here as in so many other names of places, means an island, and carries us back to the time when the meadow, for a time perhaps a sandbank exposed to view at low tide, had become an island possibly surrounded by water at high tide only. About two centuries ago the sea actually at high tide overflowed the Roodeye and came up to the Water Gate. This entrance to the city is a single arch with a postern on its southern side. It was built in 1788, when the old gate, which had become dangerous, was taken down. At the same time the sergeantcy of the gate was purchased by the city from the Earl of Derby, into whose hands it seems to have come with the Barony of Montalt. As the walk round the walls is continued, the site of the Benedictine Nunnery of St. Mary is passed on the left. It is now traversed by a road connecting the North Gate with the Grosvenor Road. This last-named thoroughfare cuts through the walls before the castle is reached, and crosses the river by a handsome stone bridge of one

span, known as the Grosvenor Bridge (see p. 114). Passing the castle, which forms the subject of the next chapter, on the opposite side of the river is to be seen the suburb of Handbridge, so often destroyed by fire and enemies during the earlier times of the city. The field near the water's edge, now a public recreation ground, is called Edgar's Field, and is traditionally the site of that king's palace. In this field is a rock, at present surmounted by a bandstand, in which is a hollow called Edgar's Cave. At its entrance is the sculpture, almost obliterated, which is believed to represent the goddess Minerva, and has been described in the first chapter. There appears to have been a ford across the Dee at this point during Roman times, the road from which led past the sculptured stone. Here, on the Chester side, there was a gate in the wall, little more than a postern, known as the Ship Gate (see fig. p. 49). It is represented in Randle Holme's drawing of the Bridge Gate, and though said to have been Roman, was not of that date, but was probably built in the time of Henry III. or Edward I. In later years it was known under the name of the 'Hole in the Wall.' It was taken down in 1838 and the aperture blocked up. The arch is still to be seen in the Groves, and the position of the aperture can be clearly traced in the wall itself. The keeper of this gate was the person in charge of the Bridge Gate, and, according to an inquisition of the time of Edward III., he had to find locks and keys for both gates and to provide a man to open and shut the Ship Gate. Tolls on various objects were exacted at this as well as at the more important entrances to the city.

The South or Bridge Gate, as it now exists, was erected in 1782, and occupies the site of a much

more massive edifice, of which there are various representations extant in old engravings. It was an archway with a strong round tower on either side. On one of these there was a remarkable octagonal tower of later date, called John Tyrer's Water Tower, shown in the figure of the old gateway. This erection owed its origin to a person of the name of John Tyrer, who was 'a Conducte in the Queere of the Cathedrall Church in Chester,' at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He introduced a system of supplying water from the Dee to the city, and the tower in question was for the purpose of getting 'head' enough to drive the water to the higher parts of the city. Tyrer's system was abandoned before his tower was taken down, for that remained until the demolition of the gate in 1781. The Harleian MS. tells us that Tyrer himself 'died when he had finished his great and good work about 1611.' The sergeantcy of this gate was originally in the hands of the Bagotte family, but Richard Bagotte being too poor to fulfil the duties belonging to the office, handed it over, in about 1267, to Philip the clerk, citizen of Chester. It was afterwards held by the Raby family, and still later in moieties by the Holes and the Norrises. From the former family one of these moieties descended through the Troutbecks to the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury. Near the Bridge Gate, according to the picturesque description given by Webb, 'the river of Dee doth here incline to enlarge itself, having gotten so near the sea, but that it is soundly girt in on either side with huge rocks of hard stone, which restrain the pride of its force.' And at this point the stream has for ages past been crossed by a bridge, from which the adjacent gate obtains its more usual name. There was

certainly a bridge in the time of Edward the Confessor, for one is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but this structure was of wood. The prepositus could summon one man from each hide of the county to come to repair it. Seeing the great importance of this bridge as a connection with Wales, it is not wonderful that different kings should have issued orders as to its rebuilding, when destroyed—three bridges, at least, were carried away by floods in 1227, 1297, and 1353—or its repair. Edward I., in 1280, issued an urgent order for the construction of a bridge, so necessary for his Welsh campaigns. A century later King Richard granted to the citizens 'the issues of the passage of the Dee at Chester and of the murage accustomed to be given for the repair of the walls, to be applied to the rebuilding of the bridge there, the destruction of which caused the inhabitants and those resorting to the said city much danger and inconvenience, and was a source of great loss.' It must have been for some time in an almost unusable condition, for thirty years previously there is a statement of the profits accruing from the neighbouring ferry, to which is added the remark that the bridge was broken down and not fully repaired. At least as late as the reign of Queen Mary, the bridge was in part constructed of wood, for the Murengers' accounts for 1557 contain an entry of 'iii planks unto Dee brygg iis.' That its custodians were afraid that it might be easily damaged is shown by the provision, firmly adhered to, that no carts with iron-shod wheels should be allowed to cross it. Such vehicles could make their way across, it is to be presumed, either by the weir or causeway, or by the ferry. There seems to have been some dispute as to who should bear the cost of rebuilding and keeping in order the bridge. The citizens, being the

nearest persons, were those first to be applied to when money was wanting; but they, pleading we may suppose that the Chester Bridge was at least as much a national as a local matter of interest, endeavoured to shift the responsibility on to other shoulders. They succeeded in proving '14 Edward I., that they were free from the duty of repairing it, but the inhabitants of the county were bound.' This cannot, however, entirely have disposed of the dispute, for in 15 Henry VII., we find St. John's Hospital establishing its claim to be free from paying sums towards the repair of the bridge. The mediæval bridge had a tower and house at either end. These were of course for protection during time of war, but when peace reigned they were let. In the time of Queen Elizabeth there was an indenture made between the civic authorities and one 'Will'm Goodman of the Citie aforesaid, M'chaunte,' letting to him these towers for a term of 'threscore yeres.' There is, however, a very important proviso, permitting the resumption of the towers in case of war. 'P'vided also, and it is concluded and agreed, that it shall and may be lefull to and for the Maior Cytizens and Comynaltie of the said Citie and their Successors, into the said Towers to reenter in the tyme of warrs within this Realme of England, either with or Againste the said Realme, and the same Towers for the defence of the said Citie duringe such tyme of warrs to occupie and vse at their wills and pleasure.' The bridge at present consists of seven arches, though it is said to have at one time possessed a greater number. In 1826 a projecting footpath, seven feet in width, was added to the ancient structure, much altering its appearance if adding to its usefulness. What the old bridge and mill looked like may be seen in the tailpiece to

this chapter. Before leaving this part of the walls, attention should be called to two other objects in the neighbourhood—the Mills and the Weir.

The Walls—the Bridge and Mills

The mill was always a most important factor in the life of any town or large village, and the tolls paid for its use often formed an important part of the income of the lord of the manor, the abbey, or other person or body to whom it belonged. In most cases tenants were bound down to use no other mill than that of their lord, and this monopoly at Chester returned a rich reward to the Earls of Chester to whom the mill belonged. So rich in fact was it, that there is a Cheshire proverb which says of an extravagant person, 'If thou hadst the rent of Dee Mills thou wouldst spend it.' In 1351 the Black Prince, as Earl of Chester, made a grant of two hundred pounds per annum—a very large sum for those days—to Richard Earl of Arundel, which payment was made from the fee-farm of the city and the monies collected from the mill. Again in 1442, Eleanor Cobham, who had been convicted of having practised against the king's life, and who had done penance, lighted taper in hand, through the streets of London, was confined for some time in the castle at Chester, during which time the clerk of the mills on the Dee was instructed by warrant to pay one hundred marks yearly for her sustenance. How stringent were the regulations as to the usage of the mill may be gathered from the fact that in the time of Edward III. it was shown that all residents in the city (except Sir Peter de Thornton, Robert de Bradford, the Abbot of 'Dieulencresse,' Roger Blount, and the nuns of St. Mary's) were bound under penalty of forfeiture of their corn to bring it to be ground at the mill, and no one was

allowed to have a hand-mill. For the third offence against this order, the horses and cart, as well as the corn, were forfeit to the earl. The miller took his percentage of the corn for the labour of grinding it, and sometimes this is alleged to have amounted to one-half of the sack. In 1093 Hugh Lupus granted permission to the Abbot of St. Werburgh's to have a mill of his own below the bridge, the earl's mill being

THE OLD BRIDGE

above it. This mill later on became a serious rival to the other establishment, for in the time of Henry IV. Henry de Sutton, then abbot, was indicted for compelling all his tenants, and also all other persons residing outside the Northgate, to grind their corn at the Bache Mill, and at the windmill belonging to the abbey. There is much known about the history of the mill, and those who would follow it more closely than is here possible are referred to the pages of Canon Morris's book. The mills have been thrice destroyed by fire, but the present buildings occupy the identical spot on which mills were erected at least

as early as somewhere about the end of the eleventh century. In the time of Edward VI. the mills, which then vested in the crown, were handed over to Sir Richard Cotton, Comptroller of the Household, in return for lands in Lincolnshire. There were also included in the grant 'that fish-room and fishing of the King's Poole in Dee, to be holden in capite by the service of the 40th part of one Knight's fee.' This reminds one that this reach of the river is and has always been celebrated for its salmon. Chester is one of the places of which the story is told that a part of the indenture of each apprentice was the covenant that he was not to be obliged to eat salmon more than so many days a week. What may have been the origin of this tale it has been so far impossible to discover, but it is a piece of folk-lore met with in many places. It is common in various parts of England, and is also met with in Scotland, Ireland, on the Continent at Dordrecht, and in America. In spite of this, it has so far proved impossible to discover any indentures anywhere containing this particular provision. The late Mr. Frank Buckland made great efforts to discover such a document, and, according to his own account, was 'once very near getting it,' but its possessor had destroyed it a week before. After a careful consideration of the evidence, it seems probable that the entire tale is a myth; but from what it may have arisen has yet to be suggested. The weir near the mill was long a bone of contention between the citizens and the owners of the mill. The former tried to have the weir removed on the ground that it was prejudicial to the interests of the city, and the latter naturally resisted this demand. Commissioners sat during the reign of James I., not merely at Chester but also at Holt, Wrexham, and

Fleet, to hear evidence on this point. The inhabitants of the first-named place contended that the existence of the weir caused their lands to be flooded, their fishing to be injured, and their navigation to be ruined. In the end the commissioners 'found some matters impertinent to their charge, and tending to mayntain the private goode of some citizens there, and not the publique weale and benefitte of the city and countrey.' This somewhat cryptic utterance was followed by the decree, which makes its meaning much clearer, that 'one full third of the said Weyre be pulled down, and the River there made open, and that one half of the said New Key shall be abated and taken away; that the obstructions and annoyance at Hoult Bridge should be wholly removed, and that ten yards in length of the said Cawsey in the middle of the channell downe to the bottom of the ryver shall be pulled down and taken away.' The ordinance was not, however, carried out, for the judges of appeal found that, the weir having existed prior to the reign of Edward I., there was no power to pull it down but only to decrease its size should it be proved to have been enhanced since it was built. There was nearly a conflict between Wales and England on this occasion, the inhabitants of the former principality threatening that they would come down and carry out the decree of the commissioners themselves. In the time of the Commonwealth the weir was again threatened, no doubt largely because the mill was at that time owned by the Gamulls, who were loyal subjects of the king.

Like the former decree, however, the order then made was never carried out; and the weir, often threatened, still exists. Returning from this digression to the subject of the walls, the next point to

notice is a set of steps leading down from the wall, to the outer side, known as the 'Recorder's Steps.' Though now public, they were once private stairs, and were erected for his own convenience by Roger Comberbach, who was then the Recorder, and lived in

THE WISHING STEPS AND ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

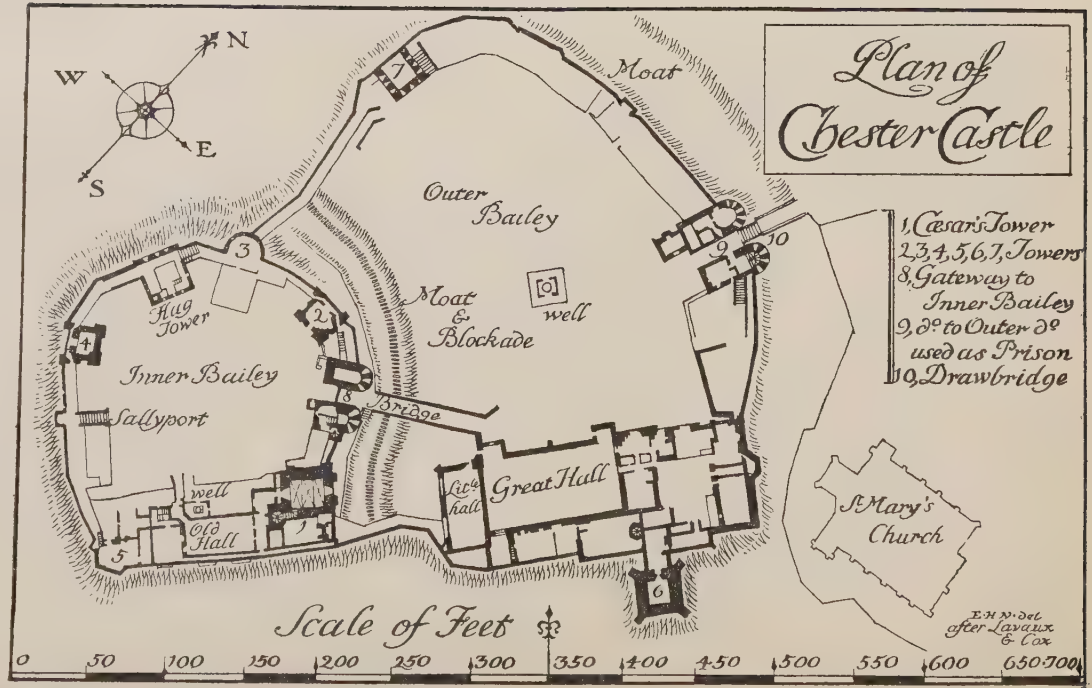
the Groves outside the walls, in 1700. Subsequently the use of these steps was permitted to the owners of one or two other private houses on the Dee side. Afterwards the parishioners of St. John's claimed, and

were accorded, the sole ownership of the steps as well as the right of way. Another set of steps, but this time forming part of the wall, lies beyond those of which we have been speaking. This set is known by the name of the Wishing Steps, from a local piece of folk-lore which proclaims that if any person forms a wish, and immediately after doing so runs from bottom to top, down again and once more up, without taking breath during that process, the wish which has been formed will be granted. As an exercise for those in training for diving competitions the attempt to carry out this task may be strongly commended Beyond the Wishing Steps comes the last of the gates the 'New Gate,' so called in the Murengers' accounts, *temp.* Edward VI. It was also known as the 'Wolf Gate,' or again as 'Pepper Gate,' from the fact that it is at the end of the street of that name. There is a story that a young man once stole away the daughter of a mayor of Chester as she was playing ball near this gate, and that the angry father caused it to be closed up. True or false, this story has given rise to the local proverb, 'When the daughter is stolen, shut the Pepper Gate.' Canon Morris produces some evidence to show that the story may have been true, and perhaps has even been successful in identifying the persons connected with it. He says: 'In the Assembly Book, vol. i., are two entries following one another, the juxtaposition of which suggests that by them the father (an alderman, not a mayor) may be identified. At a meeting of the council held Jan. 14, 1573, reference is made to "a certaine gate or passage through the walls, called Wolf-gate, or Newgate, which for divers good causes, and for the avoiding of divers enconvennences heretofore happened thereby as by old records apeareth, was shutt up and

now of late sett open to the encreasinge of the said enconveniences." An order is made that the gate shall forthwith be "stopped, made up, and fenced substancially, and as surely as the said maior shall cause it to be made up," and "no passage to be suffered in the nyght, and the same to be opened in the day." At a meeting four days later (18 Jan. 1573) Hugh Rogerson, alderman, and Richard Wright, draper, are charged with aiding and furthering the enticement and stealing away of Ellen, daughter to Alderman Rauff Aldersay. It is added that the young lady was married "by an unlawful minister to one Rauff Iaman, draper, without the consent and goodwill of any othr kinsfolk or frends, to ther great heaviness and greif, and contrary to any good civile order." The elopement was made the subject of harangues from the pulpit, the preachers blaming the magistrates for their negligence in suffering the same. "For that the like heretofore was not heard of within this citie in any man's remembrance," and to check this evil, Hugh Rogerson was fined ten shillings and committed a prisoner to his own dwelling-house until the fine was paid. Richard Wright, refusing at first to submit to punishment, was disfranchised, and had his "shopp windowes letten downe and shutt and barred for his utterannce," but later, acknowledging his fault, was restored to his franchise on payment of thirteen shillings and fourpence, and imprisonment at the mayor's pleasure.' Whether this is the case on which the story and the proverb be founded or not, it is an interesting picture of the manners of the time and the way in which the citizens dealt with the abduction of this Helen of Chester. The last object on the walls, and it is one of no great interest, is what remains of a small turret, called Thimbleby's

Tower. Beyond this the southern side of the East Gate is reached, and the circuit of the walls has been completed.

THE OLD BRIDGE (*after Cuitt*)


Plan of Chester Castle
N
W
E
S
Moat
Outer Bailey
Moat & Blockade
well
Flag Tower
Inner Bailey
Sallyport
Bridge
well
Old Hall
Lit.e hall
Great Hall
St Mary's Church
1, Caesar's Tower
2,3,4,5,6,7, Towers
8, Gateway to Inner Bailey
9, 9.o to Outer 9.o used as Prison
10, Drawbridge
Scale of Feet
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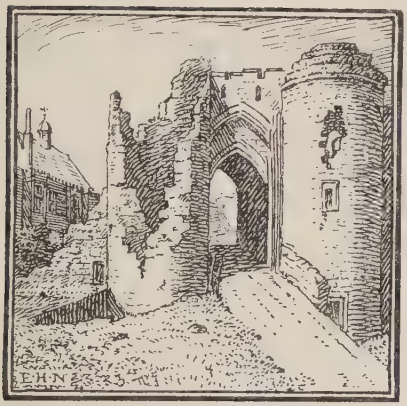
E.H.N. del after Lavaux & Cox

CHAPTER V

THE CASTLE



OLD CASTLE GATE AND GREAT SHIRE HALL

THERE may possibly have been a British earthwork on the hill where the castle now stands. It was, however, we may say, certainly not included within the limits of the Roman city. The later history of the spot, so far as it is known, repeats the story of many other fortresses in this island. The Saxon lord may have 'wrought his burh' there, or he may not; but the Norman earl, when he took possession of the land, with pick and spade heaped up his mound, and added to it a base-court, or perhaps more than one such enclosure. His earthen keep and the walls of the courts, its baileys, he further strengthened with

palisades of wattle or stockades of wood. Later on, if the fortress continued to play its part, as the years went by, stone buildings were added and a keep erected on the mound. To this may afterwards have been added outer walls, enclosing one or more baileys, containing establishments of various kinds connected with the fortress, until the complicated arrangements of one of the larger castles were arrived at. Thus the site of the buhr, at least in some cases, became that of the castle; and in the process of the later evolution the position of the original earthen mound has often become difficult, if not impossible, to find. Sometimes it is quite obvious, as at Warwick and Tamworth, at both of which places the mound is distinct to this day; but at other places, such as Kenilworth, though there is practically no doubt that there was once a mound, it is difficult, if not impossible, to say which of the heaps of earth may be the actual elevation. Now, at Chester, we know that Aethelflaed, that energetic defender of Mercia, refounded the city, which had been void for one hundred and fifty years, and no doubt at the same time wrought there a buhr, as she did at so many other places, including—to mention only those in the neighbourhood—Bridgnorth, Stafford, Eddisbury, Cherbury, and Runcorn. The castle was separated from the city itself by a shallow valley, from which rose the eminence on which the building was seated, an eminence which had an abrupt face looking towards the river. Mr. Cox, from whose erudite paper on Chester Castle much of what follows has been extracted, thinks that it is fairly certain that the inner or upper bailey of the castle, represented by the older parts of the existing structure, still stands upon the earthworks thrown up by Aethelflaed and approximately

follows their lines, and that the great mound stood on the south-western side, where it is still traceable, and was more clearly visible before the present buildings were erected, its site having always been distinguished by the flag-tower; this distinction, he thinks, having probably continued to mark it as the site of the commander's post since its construction in the year 907. The fortress was almost certainly additionally fortified with a wooden stockade, and the later Norman edifice, founded, according to Ordericus, in 1069, must have been at least partly thus provided, and so have continued for a number of years. In the Public Record Office there is a letter which is in part given in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, and may, thinks the transcriber, be dated, from internal evidence, about the year 1260. This letter, which is in Latin, contains directions about the fortification of Chester and Disarth Castles, and ordains as follows concerning the former: 'Mandamus quod ballium circa castrum nostrum Cestriæ, quod clausum fuit palo, amoto palo illo, claudi faciatis calce et petra.' Or to English a larger part of the same document: 'Henry, by the grace of God, King of England, etc. etc., to his beloved and faithful J. de Grey, his Justiciary of Chester. We command you that you cause to be removed the wooden fence of the bailey around our castle of Chester, and that you cause the said bailey to be enclosed with a stone wall. And that in like manner you re-edify the bailey around our castle of Dissard, wherever it may be necessary. And the sums you shall expend on the same, being certified by the view and testimony of lawful men, shall be allowed to you at our Exchequer.' That the entire Norman building was not so constructed, but that there was a stone keep, seems to be proved by Mr. Cox's discovery

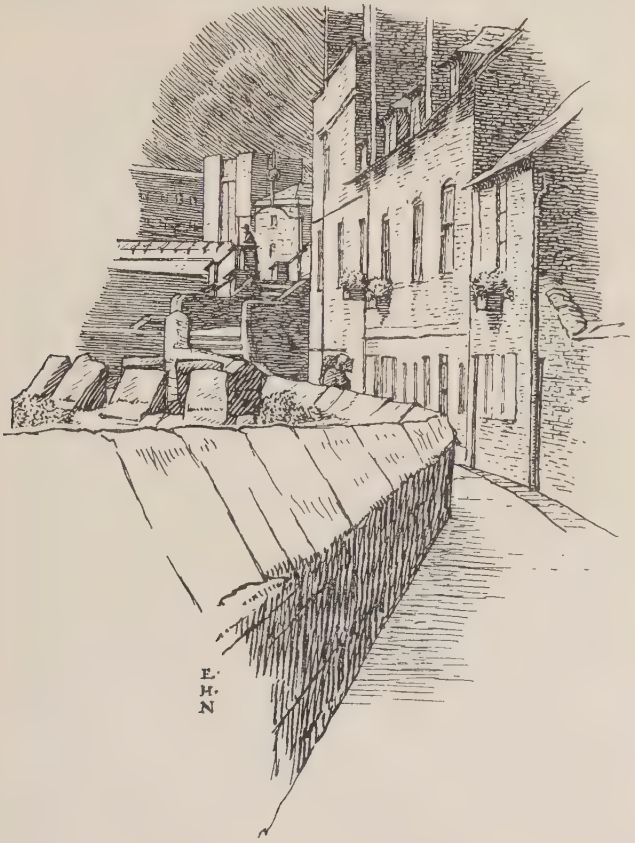
that the lower story of the flag-tower, as it still exists, is probably the much-hidden basement of the Norman keep. It is divided in the basement into two vaulted cellars, this being a Norman characteristic.

If this be the case, the contention that the so-called Cæsar's Tower was the keep falls to the ground, and indeed one must agree that this contention has been demolished by Mr. Cox's arguments. The plan of the inner bailey of Chester Castle belongs to the improved architecture of the thirteenth century. In castles of this date the keep was no longer the heart of the whole fortress, its kernel and centre. A courtyard was erected with gates and flanking towers, within which were built the hall, the chapel, and the other apartments, all of which had formerly found their place in the keep. Sometimes this enclosure, with its contained buildings, constituted the entire castle, but generally there was a second external line of defence, formed of walls, with entrenchments and earthworks. Of this period, says Mr. Cox, is Chester Castle in its upper bailey. Canon Morris notes that in the Close Rolls of 35 Henry III. (1251) is contained an order from the king to his justiciary, Alan de Zouche, directing the wall of the outer ward and the new hall in the castle, which are begun, to be finished. Mr. Cox thus describes the castle as existing at the period in question. The inner bailey of Chester Castle was surrounded by a lofty wall, partly on the ridge of the earlier entrenchments, and partly revetting or facing them. The enclosure, though conforming generally to the oval form of the old work, was polygonal, and was entered by a gatehouse flanked by two half-round towers; a third tower, round to the front and square in rear, flanked the ditch on the west and north-west; this still remains, but much

altered. The east side stood high upon a rock, and required no flanking; and on this side, which was least exposed to attack, stood the hall with its porch, and the solar or parlour, with chamber above, at the east end, at right angles with it. The main feature of the north-west face consisted of two square towers, rising to some height above the curtain walls, but having no projection beyond the line of the curtain for flanking purposes; a third square tower, the keep, to the west, occupied the mound, and formed the flag-tower. A little to the south was a square wall bastion, which, so far as most plans and drawings go, is shown open at the gorge. But the requirements of the defence, also some slight remains of foundations, and one drawing in Grose's *Antiquities*, indicate that it was originally closed, and corresponded in plan with the square tower flanking the entrance gateway. Near it a sallyport opened from a flight of steps at the base of the wall, and was defended by a machicolated bartizan carried on corbels above it. The gatehouse had a width of fifty feet. The square tower next to it (westward) had its inner face smaller than the others; its flanks inclined inwards to meet this, the larger faces measured thirty feet, the round-fronted tower was twenty-five by fifty feet, and the keep on the mound thirty feet square. The upper story of the keep was reached by steps on each side (apparently later constructions than the tower) rising from the curtain wall, and defended by a parapet corbelled outwards with stepped merlons. The tower east of the gateway is the present Cæsar's Tower, containing the chapel, a crypt below it, and a vaulted room above. The purpose of the three square towers was not to flank the curtain wall, but to command from their summits the passage of the river and the

strip of land between the river and the city wall. This, Mr. Cox thinks, constituted the entire of the first mediæval or military castle; in fact, he points out that the buildings of the outer or lower bailey mask, to a great extent, the command that the older towers were intended to cover, separating them from the control of the open land towards the north; and he finds a confirmation of this theory in the earlier and later views which exist of this part of the building. The square towers on the enclosure wall, with the exception of Cæsar's Tower, appear to have been originally all open in the gorge or rear, and adapted solely for defensive use, not for occupation by troops or stores; if they were closed at all, it was probably with wood. At a later date, the gorges were closed with masonry, and the towers made fit for occupation. This, he says, is shown by the fact that the buttresses on the exterior of the wall are all of the pilaster type, prevalent in the early first pointed style; those in the rear are of later character (probably fifteenth-century type), suggesting that they were added work. The buttresses of Cæsar's Tower are of the pilaster form on each face. Thus, these towers seem to have had only a defensive use, of which the building of the outer bailey at a later date partially deprived them. The hall, he proceeds, of this earlier castle was towards the east, furthest withdrawn from points of attack; its size was thirty-three by sixty-six feet; it had a porch at the north end, communicating also with the chapel in Cæsar's Tower, and having a chamber over it set transversely to the hall, adjoining which was a well. At its south end a building of the same dimensions contained the solar, or parlour, and the chamber; and from these, at the south angle, a staircase led down to the bottom of the wall into the ditch. Below

this hall and chambers there appear to have been substructures, with narrow lights opening in the wall, The Castle



CÆSAR'S TOWER AND BRIDGE GATE

probably cellars or crypts for storage. Cæsar's Tower,

still in existence, has, as Mr. Cox points out, none of the internal features of a keep, being devoid of any fireplace or well, and possessing no rooms spacious enough to serve as habitations for the earl or his retinue. Its ground story is a finely groined crypt to the chapel, and is very little below the level of the present castle-yard; the groining forms a kind of sexpartite vault, with bold, plainly chamfered ribs springing from short, half-octagon wall shafts with plain capitals, set upon a high plinth. This room is entered by a door with a plain soffit, not divided into orders, and with a simple roll-moulding on the outer edge; a single small square window lights it; and on the right hand, a wide newel-staircase, occupying the angle turret, leads to the two upper rooms. On the middle story is the chapel, a lofty room divided into three bays of quadripartite vaulting, carried on detached round vaulting shafts at the sides, with caps and a single roll-moulding at the angles; the ribs of the acutely pointed vaulting cells are very massive and finely moulded, with three filleted rolls and an intermediate angular member; there is no longitudinal rib. At each springing the vaulting shaft is circular, with a floriated and voluted capital and a moulded base, characteristic of the first pointed style, and rather early in the period; but these and the mouldings mark the date unmistakably as being within the fully developed style that prevailed in the reign of Henry III. The door is at the right side in the first bay; and at what should be the west end the window has a lancet arch, which in one of the ancient drawings shows as two trefoiled lights; it is now built into a square, as is the window over the altar. This structure stood in a recess in the thickness of the wall, with a low segmental pointed arch over it. The

Easter Sepulchre probably exists in the shape of a similar recess on the left, and on the right there is a plain aumbry. The interior surface of the walls of the chapel was painted in frescoes on a coat of plaster, but these are now almost indistinguishable owing to the whitewash which has defaced them. According to an MS. account of the chapel of the seventeenth century, there were a number of coats of arms amongst its decorations. Of these, some do not appear to have been identified; the others, according to a writer in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, belonged to families most probably connected with judges, chamberlains, or other chief officers of the Palatinate Court or of the castle. One of them displays the arms of Roger de Clinton, Bishop of Coventry, Lichfield, and Chester. It was in this chapel that James II. heard Mass on the visit to Chester, as recorded in an earlier chapter. This is probably the last time on which this edifice has been used for its original purpose. A ditch, apparently over one hundred feet wide, separated the outer from the inner bailey—the former having, it would seem, been erected in the reign of Edward I. The gatehouse was on the north-east, and was protected by two massive and lofty half-drum towers. On the east of the tower was a court, where the kitchen and other buildings associated with it found a place; and still further south was the 'splendid and spacious shire-hall, the glory of the castle, whose loss is poorly compensated by the great and costly modern building reared by Harrison on its site, notwithstanding its majesty of classical proportion and detail,' to quote Mr. Cox's words. From his account of this building the following details are extracted: The length of the hall was ninety-nine feet, and its extreme breadth was said to be forty-five feet, but the plan shows only

a breadth of about forty to forty-two feet; it was of great height, and is described as resembling Westminster Hall. 'Height very awful,' says Pennant, who adds other details concerning this chamber. At its western base were two projecting bays, one at each end. That towards the north was the porch, which had its doorway turned towards the south, so that it might face away from any missiles thrown over the north or west curtain wall. From this porch the visitor would pass behind the screens, which almost always occupied the lower end of the hall. Behind this screen would be the entrances or points of communication with the buttery, and above it a minstrel gallery. At the far end from the screen would be the dais. It is most probable, thinks the writer from whom quotation has so frequently been made in this section, that Edward I. constructed the whole of the outer bailey as an addition to the original castle. The fact that this monarch was an active organiser of municipal and local legislative institutions also makes it probable that these great buildings, designed from the first for the use of the shire courts, and the exchequer or Parliament chamber of the County Palatine, were provided by him for their accommodation. There seems to have been a central hearth, judging from the fact that pictures of the hall show a very large louvre in the centre of the roof. From Pennant's description, the roof at his period seems to have been of the hammer-beam type; but this was not the original covering of the hall, which was, in all probability, in part supported by oak pillars, like the Guildhall at York. This method of carrying a roof was superseded by the hammer-beam plan, by which roofs of wide span could be supported without the aid of pillars. The exchequer court stood across the

south end of the shire-hall, its two stories not, however, reaching the height of its sister edifice. The upper chamber was fitted for the purposes of the court itself. It was arranged somewhat after the manner of a chapter-house, and had ten canopied and sculptured stalls—one for the earl, one for the abbot, and four on each side for the barons. External to the outer bailey was a wide ditch, affording space for a garden, claimed in 1524 with the custody of the gates of the Dee Bridge by George, Earl of Shrewsbury. Canon Morris, quoting from a contemporary document, gives an account of how the produce of the garden was disposed of between gardener and earl. The gardener claimed all the fruit of the best tree in the garden, called the 'Restyng Tree,' as well as the fruit remaining on the other trees after the first shaking, which was the property of the earl. In return for the fruit, thus described, the gardener was bound to find vegetables for the earl during his stay at the castle from Michaelmas to Lent, and leeks during the Lenten fast. The description of the castle may be concluded by some of the remarks made about it in the *Vale Royal*, written late in Elizabeth's reign :—'Upon the south side of the city, near unto the said water of Dee, and upon a high bank or rock of stone, is mounted a strong and stately *castle*, round in form; the base-court likewise enclosed with a circular wall, which to this day retaineth one testimony of the Romans' magnificence, having therein a fair and ancient square tower; which, by testimony of all writers I have hitherto met withal, beareth the name of Julius Caesar's Tower.' After this the rooms in the castle are enumerated, amongst which it is noted that 'within the precincts of which castle is also the

king's prison for the county of Chester, with the office of prothonotary.' Further, it is added that there is 'a fair draw-well of water in the middest of the court, divers sweet and dainty orchards and gardens, besides much of the ancient buildings, for want of care, fallen to ruin and decay.' Mention of the prison reminds one of the many prisoners of importance who have been confined within its walls. It has already been stated that it was used for the soldiers captured in the 'Fifteen' and the 'Forty-Five,' and Canon Morris enumerates the following notable persons who have also been prisoners here: David, brother of Prince Llewelyn; King Richard II. and Janico d'Artois, his trusty adherent; Eleanor Cobham, good Duke Humphrey's Duchess, for whose keep the revenues of the mill were employed; Richard Oldon, Abbot of St. Werburgh's and Bishop of Sodor; and later, in connection with the dissolution of the monasteries, the Abbot of Norton, Randall Brereton, baron of the exchequer at Chester, and John Hall, merchant of Chester, who were seized by Sir Piers Dutton for complicity with the 'Pilgrimage of Grace.' In the times of William III. it was employed as a prison for captives from Ireland, and sums for the keep of these unhappy persons are contained in a list of payments, made out of the Secret Service Money of William III., which is preserved in the Bodleian Library. If the digression may be pardoned, it may here be pointed out that the fact that Chester was for so many years the main port for Dublin, and thus for the central parts of Ireland, and that it so remained until Liverpool, and still more Holyhead, drove it from its position, accounts for the large amount of connection of various kinds between the County Palatine and the capital of the sister isle.

Attention has already been called to the fact that Chester was the port of departure for soldiers going to the Irish war and a place for the reception of Irish prisoners, and another curious fact may be cited before this matter is left. There is still extant a list of the students in attendance on the courses at Trinity College, Dublin, during the Provostship of Temple, who was appointed to that post in 1609. In this list are included seventy-eight Irish students, twelve strangers of Derbyshire, and eight strangers of Cheshire. What was the special nexus with the first-named county is not clear, but it is easy to understand why Cheshire students should have crossed the water to the Elizabethan University. No mention of strangers from any other part of England, or indeed from any other part of the kingdom, appears in the list referred to. The castle as it now stands is separated from the road by a classic colonnade commenced in 1797, when amidst great festivities the first of the columns of the portico was erected. According to the *Chester Chronicle* of the period, 'The column having been previously brought to its situation, and all the machinery prepared, several coins of his present Majesty, in a small urn of Wedgwood's ware, enclosed in another of lead, were deposited in a cavity of the plinth, over which was placed a brass plate with a suitable inscription. This being done, the machinery immediately began to work, the band playing "God save the King," and in about twenty minutes the column was raised; upon which the Volunteers fired three excellent vollies, the field pieces firing likewise three rounds, and the cannon upon the battery; together with three cheers from the whole of the corps, workmen, etc. These columns are of excellent stone, of a good colour, and

The Castle

were brought from Manley, about eight miles from Chester, upon a carriage with six wheels built on purpose, drawn by sixteen horses, and when in the

GROSVENOR BRIDGE AND CASTLE

rough weighed from fifteen to sixteen tons each. They are three feet six inches in diameter, and without the capitals, measure twenty-two feet six inches long, being considerably larger than those in front of the New College at Edinburgh. There will be twelve of these columns in the portico in two rows, of the Doric order, without bases, and twelve more likewise, of one stone, something smaller, of the Ionic order, forming a colonnade round the semicircular part of the inside of the hall. This building, when complete, it is presumed, will be one of the most magnificent edifices of the kind in the kingdom; and from the manner in which it is internally contrived for the convenience of the court and audience,

it is hoped, too, it will both for seeing and hearing be one of the most useful. It has the same disposition within as, but larger than, the new hall nearly finished in the Gothic style at Lancaster by the same architect. A great portion of the hall within, and the portico, will be completely finished with hewn stone of the same quality as the column; and there is no doubt but that the execution of this massy piece of masonry will do equal credit to the undertakers as, from the models and present appearance, the gaol and county hall promise to do to the architect.' The portico seems to have taken a long time to complete, for in 1813 there is another newspaper entry narrating the erection of a further column. 'On Thursday last one of the columns belonging to the superb entrance gate to Chester Castle yard was reared upon its plinth. The Denbigh Militia attended upon this occasion, and after the column was reared, fired three excellent vollies. Their Colonel, Sir W. W. Wynn, after depositing, in a small circular cavity cut in the plinth, several coins of the present reign, placed over them a brass plate bearing the following inscription:—"Under this column, erected August 26th, 1813, in the presence of the Royal Denbighshire Militia, Sir Watkin W. Wynn, Colonel of the said regiment, placed this plate to record the signal victory gained over the French by Field-Marshal Lord Wellington, near Vittoria, in Spain, June the 21st, 1813, and 2nd of the Regency of H.R.H. Geo., Prince of Wales." Round this plate, upon the stone plinth, was cut the following memorial of the last triumph of the Marquis of Wellington:—"Victory of the Pyrenees, gained by Lord Wellington, July 30th, 1813."'

Before leaving the subject of the castle, it may be

appropriate to say something about the Gloverstone and the district which took its name from it, since both were in this neighbourhood. The subject has been fully dealt with by the late Mr. Shrubsole in a paper printed in the *Journal* of the Chester Archæological and Historic Society, from which the following notes are extracted. The Gloverstone itself, which has disappeared and was very likely rolled into the ditch of the old castle, since tradition says that it was buried, was probably a large smooth boulder, placed at an angle of the street in order to secure the foot-path from traffic. Its name was derived from the purpose to which it was secondarily put, for it was used by the freemen glovers, who lived hereabouts, to scrape and otherwise prepare skins for their trade. The washing was conveniently performed in the river, easily approached by an opening in the wall at the foot of St. Mary's Hill. It was also a boundary stone, for on its east and south side the township extended no further east than this point, and on the west it ran in a direct line to the Nuns' Gardens. The township of Gloverstone itself was a piece of land separating the castle from the city, and lying between the fortress and the city wall at White Friars. This plot was claimed as the appurtenance of the castle. At first, no doubt, it was unoccupied and served as a kind of parade-ground for mustering and drilling soldiers, purposes for which there was scant accommodation within the walls. Thus it formed a part of the liberties of the castle. Here, says Mr. Shrubsole, minor or trade offenders might dwell under the aegis of the castle, and he adds that whatever may have been the nature of the offence committed by the refugees, it came in time to be recognised as the home for those oppressed by

the rigid laws and customs under which trade was then pursued, and as a place where in later times the leave-lookers of the city could not interfere with trade or traders, or the mayor or corporation assert any jurisdiction. It became, in his opinion, not so much a residence for the viciously disposed as for the unfortunate victims of oppressive laws. Possibly there may at one time have been a 'Jewry' at this place. At a time too when the trades formed themselves into guilds for their own protection and for the purposes of keeping out strangers, Gloverstone may have been a place to which offenders against trade rules were banished. The site of the township was that of the later St. Bridget's Church taken down in 1892, for in 1824 Batenham writes: 'It has recently been suggested to remove St. Bridget's Church to a more eligible situation. In this event it is proposed to rebuild the church on the place called Gloverstone, where there would be a spacious burying ground.' He adds that this township was 'a place where freemen now exercised their respective callings unmolested,' but that 'the greater part of the houses are now taken down to make room for projected improvements.' In 1666, when there was fear of an invasion of the country by the Dutch forces, a meeting was summoned to concert measures of defence, and this meeting was to take place at Gloverstone. A letter was sent by the Lords-Lieutenant of the County to the authorities of the various Hundreds of Cheshire, which runs:—

'To all and evrie the Lords, bar'tts, K'ts, Esq'rs, and Gent' within Edesbury.

'Gentlemen,—There being great reason to doubt that there are preparations made by the Enemies of

The City of Chester

this Kingdome towards an Invasion, wee cannot omitt to give you Notice thereof, you being equally concerned with vs in such a danger. And further to Informe you that wee have thought fitt to Secure this County in the best manner wee can: ffor w'ch purpose wee have appointed a meeting at Glover Stone vpon Tuesday, the 17th of this Instant July, by tenn of the clock in the aforenoone: Att w'ch tyme and place wee doe earnestly desire you to meet vs, being assured of yo'r Cherefull Concurrence and assistance in every perticuler relating to his Ma'ties service.

'In this Confidence wee remaine Gent',

(Your) Aff'tt freinds,

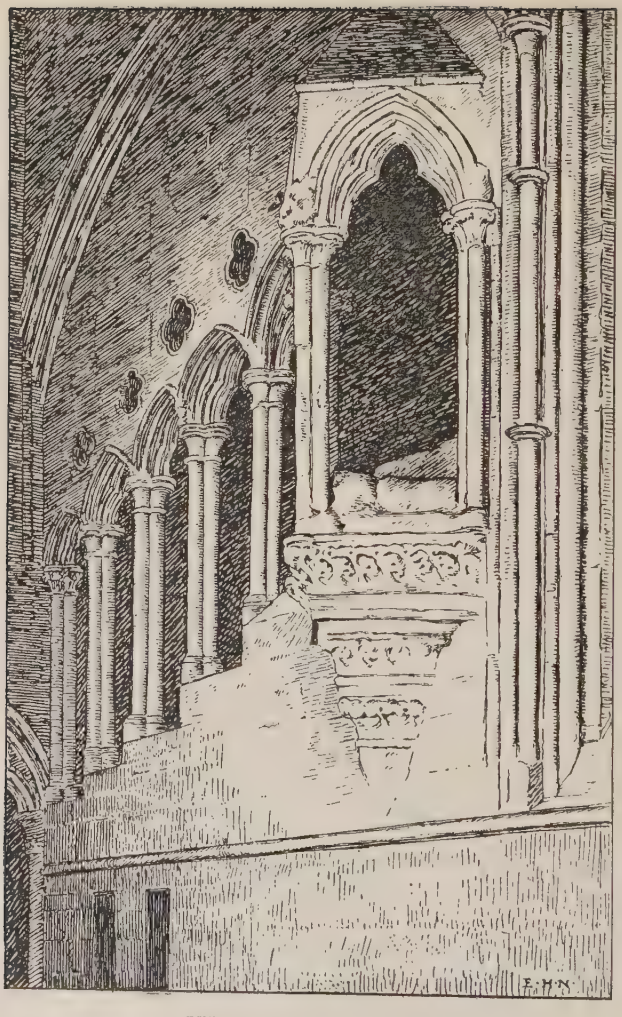
DERBY.
R. CHOLMONDELEY.
PHI. EGERTON.

'NORTHWICH, *July 11th*, 1666.'

So that once more the ancient place of assembly of troops was used as the place for holding a gathering called together to take measures to repel invasion. Canon Morris points out that it was at the Gloverstone that the city sheriffs received from the sheriffs of the county, or the constable of the castle, for conduct to the place of punishment, prisoners who were condemned to death or to be whipped. In like manner, when offenders were apprehended within the city for offences committed in the county, they were taken to the stone and there handed over to the county authorities. At this point the mayor, when he had occasion to come to the castle, would direct the sword and mace, usually carried before him, to be put down, and the sheriffs laid aside their white wands of office. Such a township must necessarily have been something of a thorn in the side of its neighbour the city. It had been a sanctuary for many years; it was a place where

foreigners—that is, non-freemen of the city—had set up dwelling-houses and shops, plied their trades, sold their wares and seriously competed with the freemen of the city, in what no doubt these last considered a highly illegitimate manner. Moreover, 'tiplings of Ale and Beere' took place there, and doubtless many other disorderly occurrences such as might be expected in a place free from civic discipline, and probably little hampered by the rule of the authorities of the castle. No doubt these 'tiplings' were not confined to the inhabitants of Gloverstone, but were taken part in by the baser sort of Cestrian citizens. Hence many quarrels between the opposing parties, and the obvious necessity for bringing the township under the government of the municipality of Chester. In the first quarter of the last century the area was required for public improvements, and the old township disappeared.

STONE BOSS IN THE CATHEDRAL CLOISTERS



PULPIT IN THE REFECTORY

CHAPTER VI

THE ABBEY OF ST. WERBURGH

THE OLD EAST GATE

THERE is considerable doubt as to the date of the first foundation of a religious edifice on the site now occupied by the Cathedral of Chester. Mr. Hiatt thinks it almost certain that, during the later and Christian period of the Roman occupation of Chester, the site of the cathedral was occupied by a church dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, which during the Anglo-Saxon ascendency was re-dedicated to SS. Werburgh and Oswald. However this may be, there seems to have been a church here early in the reign of Aethelstan, for in Raine's *History of York* it is stated that, after the battle of Brunanburh, that monarch gave treasure to the shrine at Chester. According to some writers, Wulphere, of whom mention was made in the first chapter, founded here a nunnery of which his daughter St. Werburgh

was abbess. This legend, which we owe to William of Malmesbury, must be dismissed as unhistorical: but there is more to be said for the statement that there was a small religious house here in Saxon times, perhaps a nunnery, and that to this house were removed the remains of St. Werburgh, which had been previously deposited at Hanbury in 875. No doubt this religious house, whatever may have been its character, suffered severely at the hands of the Danes. At any rate it was re-edified by the vigorous 'Lady of the Mercians,' Aethelflaed, who set up an establishment here for secular canons, which was later on more fully endowed by Edgar, whose charter is dated 958. Leofric of Mercia and his wife Godgifu, better known under the name of Godiva, who were great benefactors of religion, repaired the buildings of this establishment and gave further privileges to it. At the time of Domesday, the community held thirteen houses in Chester—one occupied by the warden or head of the body, the others by the canons. After the Conquest these thirteen, the *pauculi clerici* of William of Malmesbury, were ejected by Hugh Lupus, and the convent was handed over to the Benedictines to form an abbey of that order. The monks were bound by their charter to pray 'for the soul of William, then king, and those of King William, his most noble father, his mother Queen Maud, his brothers and sisters, King Edward the Confessor, themselves the founders, and those of their fathers, mothers, antecessors, heirs, parents, and barons, the souls of all Christians, as well living as deceased.' Many possessions were given to the abbey by its founders, and it was to be independent of all other houses of the order. A place for a mill is granted,

also permission to the abbot to hold his own court, to receive tolls, and to take all the profits of the fair at St. Werburgh's Feast for three days. In order to prevent any interference with the success of the fair, it was also ordained that any malefactor might come to it and be free from arrest so long as the fair lasted, provided that he was not guilty of any new offence during that period. The Abbot's Court had no power of outfangtheof—that is, over thieves taken outside its own liberties—though this right belonged to the Abbey of Vale Royal. During the fair, it had criminal jurisdiction in all cases, except those of murder. Where the punishment was capital, the execution took place on the earl's gallows, but it was carried out by the officers of the abbot. Trial by wager of battle was sometimes permitted by the Abbot's Court, which within its own jurisdiction was equal in all respects to that of the earl. In his confirmation of the charter, Ranulph Meschines, the third earl, says that he came himself into the Abbot's Court with one plea, taking the decision from the abbot's judge, in order to show his respect for St. Werburgh and her abbey. The sentence was pronounced, says the charter, 'non a meis sed a judiciis abbatis, ut in omnibus habeat beata Werburga jus suæ dignitatis imperpetuum.'

To continue the history of the Abbey: in the year in which it was founded, St. Anselm, then a monk of the Abbey of Bec, was at Chester, and being permitted to nominate the first abbot, placed in that position his own chaplain Richard. It was after his return from this visit that St. Anselm was made Archbishop of Canterbury. During the abbacy of Richard, the building of the Norman church must

have been commenced. There can be little doubt that it had a predecessor of stone belonging to the Saxon period. No doubt at the early part of that period churches were built of wood or of wattle, but during the latter part many edifices were erected of stone, and Leofric's church is pretty certain to have been of that material. No person who has made any study at all of the churches of this island needs to be told that the Normans were active church-builders, and from the point of view of lovers of antiquity they were unscrupulous builders also, for they swept away, in most cases, all traces, at least above ground, of any pre-existent edifices in order to carry out a new plan of their own unhampered. Had there been a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings at that date, it would have had a busy time of it. So it comes about that whatever kind of church may have occupied the site of the cathedral during the Saxon period, there is no fragment of the existing edifice which can with security be said to have belonged to its predecessor. The new church, says Mr. Hiatt, was cruciform, the choir and choir aisles terminating in three apses, of which the central was the largest and most imposing. The nave was somewhat short, and there is no evidence of the existence of western towers. Each of the shallow transepts probably terminated apsidally. The whole building was dominated by a central tower. In its general aspect, he adds, the Norman church at Chester, as pictured by Sir Gilbert Scott, seems to have had many points of similarity with the Norman plan of Canterbury as drawn by the late Professor Willis. The western towers, the great central tower, and the eastern apsidal terminations of the nave and transepts, would at any rate appear

to have been common to both. At the same time there were at Chester other features, such as the radiating chapels and the continuation of the aisle round the apses, which did not exist at Canterbury, though they are found at Gloucester Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, and other early Norman churches in England. The portions of the existing church referable to this and other periods of the history of the abbey will be mentioned in the chapter dealing with the edifice itself, so that we may now proceed with our account of the abbots and the community.

The Abbey of St. Werburgh

After the death of Abbot Richard four years elapsed before his successor was appointed. This delay, which arose from the refusal of the young Earl Richard to nominate—a refusal dictated no doubt by covetous designs upon the revenues of the house—was thought to have been avenged by his death on the White Ship. Prior, however, to the first abbot's death, this same young earl had augmented the possessions and privileges of the abbey, giving it tithes of the salmon taken at the bridge, and tithes also of the earl's mill above it, together with land and other valuable rights. During the time of the second abbot the building of the church went on, what remains of the north-west tower of that period being then completed. For some time, however, the abbey does not seem to have made very great progress; in fact, its property suffered a good deal, during the abbacy of Geoffrey (1194-1208), from inundations of the sea at Ince and on the Wirral, and from the depredations of the Welsh, who seized from the monks a valuable incumbency and two manors. At this time the church seems to have been in an almost ruinous condition, for it is described as 'intolerably

threatened with ruin, and threatening with danger of death those who assisted at the divine offices.' During Geoffrey's time something seems to have been done towards the reparation of the edifice, and still more was effected during the next abbacy, that of Hugh Grylle (1208-1226), when extensions were made in the direction of the Northgate, and repairs carried out in connection with the existing buildings. Thomas Capenhurst (1249-1265) held office during a very troublous period for the abbey, since powerful nobles were endeavouring at that time to seize the monastic possessions. There is a common belief that the families who were concerned in the spoliation of monastic property during the reign of Henry VIII. and his successors have been unfortunate afterwards, and that the stolen goods of which they possessed themselves have turned out to be a curse and not a blessing. Many instances are narrated in Spelman's *History of Sacrilege*, and many legends still attach to such properties and to the families which have owned them. According to the Chronicle of St. Werburgh evil fates befell those who attempted to rob the Mercian Saint of her rights. Roger de Montalt, Justice of Chester, obliged the abbey to surrender two manors and some other properties, but 'his eldest son died within fifteen days. Many other notable misfortunes befell the said Roger not long afterwards. Roger himself died in poverty within two years, the common people being ignorant of the place of his burial.' Another noble, Roger de Venables, also attempted to secure from the abbey an advowson to which he had no right. 'And when the said Roger had obtained this advowson by a wrongful verdict in the county court of Chester, the lord abbot proved that this had been gained unfairly, and recovered the

aforesaid advowson. But the said Roger died miserably within the same year.' Still later (1263) the abbey was actually seized by William la Zouche, the Justiciary, who behaved so badly to the churchmen of the city that they laid it under a local interdict for four days. The next abbot, one of the most celebrated in the list, was Simon de Albo Monasterio, or of Whitchurch (1265-1289). At the time of his election to the abbacy Simon de Montfort was in power at Chester, and Lucas de Taney was his Justiciary. Lucas prevented the abbot-elect from being properly instituted, and took the revenues of the abbey into his own hands, in order to spend them upon his own gratification. When this state of things came to the knowledge of Simon de Montfort, having ascertained that the election had been canonically carried out, he caused the abbot to be instituted, and ordered that 'all the goods of St. Werburgh that had been consumed by him, with all the revenues of the monastery during the vacancy, should be restored to the abbot-elect.' On the fall of de Montfort the unhappy abbot found himself in trouble with Prince Edward for having accepted institution at the hands of his enemy. However, Simon, the abbot, was a man of tact in dealing with his fellowmen, and having gone to see the prince at Beeston Castle, he not only made his peace, but obtained compensation for all the goods of which he had been despoiled by the royal servants. The favour which he then gained with the prince was increased when the latter came to the throne. The abbot assisted him in an expedition into Wales against Llewelyn, and obtained a very important addition to the privileges of the abbey, namely, a precept that the charters were not to be infringed. Later in his reign,

The Abbey of St. Werburgh

the king gave leave to the abbot to hunt everywhere in the Forest of Delamere (de la Mara) and to take six harts and six hinds. He also ordered that venison from the same forest and from that of Wirral should be sent to the abbey 'for the support of the monks then occupied in the great work of building up the church.' It was, in fact, at this time that the east arm of the church and the lady-chapel were erected. By this means a profound alteration, as pointed out by Sir Gilbert Scott, was made in the arrangements of the Norman church. The apsidal altar end, with continuous aisle and radiating chapels, was replaced by a prolonged, square-ended choir with parallel aisles. The lady-chapel, which was the first part of the new work to be erected, took the place of the central of the three original chapels, whilst the two lateral were replaced by apsidal chapels at the ends of the aisles. The high altar was placed a bay short of the east end, a screen crossing the church from pillar to pillar, behind which was an ambulatory which gave access to the lady-chapel itself. During the same abbacy there was a prolonged struggle with the citizens as to the fair on St. John Baptist's Day, which was finally settled by an agreement drawn up before Reginald de Gray, the Justice, the Prior of Birkenhead, and others. As it affords a very good example of the kind of disputes which followed upon the divided jurisdictions or liberties in the same city, the following account may be extracted from Canon Morris's book:—'The abbot claimed for his convent to hold the fair on St. John Baptist's Day, before the Abbey Gate; not only near the gate in the convent's own booths, but elsewhere in the street near the abbey, and that all articles for sale should be exposed there, and nowhere else during the fair. The mayor

and citizens disputed this claim, contending that they were at liberty to sell goods anywhere else in the city during the fair as they pleased. It was agreed that the citizens should have and hold the fairs, and erect booths and stalls (*selde et ementoria*) yearly at fair-time, in the place extending from the gate of the cemetery to the houses of the abbot under the cemetery wall, and also opposite those booths and elsewhere in the street as they pleased, saving only the part which lay between the Abbey Gate and the Cemetery Gate. These stalls were to be erected so as not to interfere with access to the abbey buildings, and were to be removed immediately after the end of the fair. The abbot agreed for the convent that during the course of the fair which they held in the street near the abbey, they would not let any of their stalls or booths to any traders of the city as long as the stalls erected by the citizens remained unlet, but they were at liberty to let to foreign traders, and even to the city traders, if the booths erected by the citizens were insufficient. The abbot further conceded to the citizens the right of "stallage" in fair time yearly throughout the city, in return for an annual payment to the abbey of 46s. 8d.' No further incident in the history of the abbey claims attention until the period of office of William de Bebyngton or Bynyngton, who having been previously prior, succeeded to the higher office, which he held for twenty-five years, in 1324. During his time the abbey secured two great privileges. In the first place, it became a 'mitred' abbey—that is to say, its abbot became possessed of the right to wear a mitre and to pontificate in his own abbey, in fact, to what may be described as semi-episcopal functions. This privilege at once lifted an abbey from the general ruck of

The Abbey of St. Werburgh

religious houses into the first rank. It was followed by the additional privilege, sometimes given to the greater houses, of exemption from the bishop's visitation. The next abbot was Richard de Seynesbury, who succeeded to the mitre in 1349. His period of office was a troubled one, but this time the troubles seem to have arisen from the turbulence of the abbot himself and from his aggressive conduct rather than from the malice of outsiders. At the end, in 1362, the Provincial President of the Benedictines, who was Abbot of St. Albans, with his sub-prior and the Prior of Coventry, visited the abbey under a commission issued by the Abbot of Evesham. Richard seems to have felt that there was no defence to be made for his conduct, so he sent his resignation to the Pope. Of the abbots who succeeded him there is not much to be said. In the very next abbacy, the right of exemption from episcopal visitation, which had been recently conceded, was revoked by Pope Urban, sufficient proof of the fact that all was not satisfactory within the abbey. It is not until we arrive at 1485 that we come to an abbacy during which distinct advances were made in connection with the buildings. This was during the seven years of office of Simon Ripley, the twenty-third abbot. He brought to an end the work which had been commenced a century before by Richard de Seynesbury; he rebuilt the upper part of the nave and also the manor-house belonging to the abbey at Saighton. This abbot died at Warwick on the 30th of August 1492, and was buried there in St. Mary's Church. On the north side of the large north-east pillar, supporting the central tower of the abbey church, there are still some traces of a representation of the Transfiguration, in which was introduced a figure of

this abbot under a canopy, with a book in one hand, and the other lifted up in the act of blessing, the ring upon the fourth finger. John Birchenshaw, who succeeded Ripley, was involved in a serious quarrel with the civic authorities, whose power had been waxing as that of the convent had been waning. For a time he was actually deprived of his abbacy, but was again restored to his former position. Shortly afterwards we find him engaged in a dispute with the Bishop of Lichfield, in whose diocese the abbey was, as to the abbatial right to the use of the mitre, the pastoral staff, and other pontificals, and as to the power of giving the benediction. This dispute having been referred to Rome, a commission was issued to Cardinal Wolsey to hear and decide the question. On Birchenshaw's death, or perhaps resignation (for it is not certain which), in 1537, licence was given for the election of another abbot, and the place was filled by Thomas Clarke, who had been a monk of the abbey. Possibly his election was prearranged with the king, as in other instances of the same kind elsewhere, for he immediately surrendered the abbey. As his reward he received, as other persons of the same kind did in other places, the first position as dean of the new cathedral establishment. At the time of its dissolution the revenues of the abbey were estimated as being worth £1003, 5s. 11d. per annum. Canon Morris sums up the possessions and privileges belonging to the great Benedictine Abbey which for so many years had played an important part in the history of Chester. Richly endowed, he says, with fair lands in various parts of Cheshire, especially in the Wirral peninsula, the patronage of valuable rectories, one-fourth part of the city of Chester itself, and a considerable tract of the most desirable pro-

perty in the immediate neighbourhood, forming an almost unbroken ring round the city, the abbey could not fail to occupy a commanding influence in the Palatinate. The influence arising from its extensive property was increased by the lavish hospitality exercised by successive abbots, who devoted the endowments of rectories and lands, the tithes of mills, etc., to the maintenance of kitchen and pantry. Not only did they entertain kings and archbishops on the occasion of their visiting and passing through Chester, but great nobles, brother abbots, besides the inferior clergy, and ordinary wayfarers, were constantly guests at St. Werburgh's, and entertained in most generous fashion. The abbey, with its circuit of walls and barred gates, was a place of considerable strength. The abbot, by reason of his sacred office and the large possessions of his convent, was more influential than any but the highest nobles of the land. His manor-houses of Saighton and Ince, to which he would make from time to time stately progress, were strongly fortified. About Saighton and Huntington Abbot Birchenshaw had formed a noble park, and he had extensive warrens elsewhere. Many considerable families held lands by tenure of various offices, amongst them his master-cook, who held large property in Wirral. The valuable rectory of Ince was appropriated to the use of his almoner. No less a person than the Earl of Derby was his seneschal in 1 Henry VIII., and down to the time of the dissolution, with a salary of 40s. The Lord of Burwardesley held his manor as the abbot's champion, and was bound on occasion to stand forward in the Abbot's Court and do battle in defence of the convent rights and claims. At the Chester Fair, which was

originally the right of the abbey, not of the city, the abbot had exclusive criminal jurisdiction in all cases except trials for murder, as has already been mentioned. He held his own courts, at which more than one of the line of mighty Norman earls consented to plead, and the tenants of his manors for centuries rendered suit and service at St. Thomas's Court, on the south side of the Abbey Gate.

The Abbey of St. Werburgh

The half-yearly court for the manor of St. Thomas, held by the abbot, was continued by the dean and chapter, as the successors to his property, as late as the middle of the last century. The chapter had stocks of their own, and a cucking-stool for the punishment of any scolds within their jurisdiction. Some of the entries in the register of this court are curious, as showing a continuity of jurisdiction; and perhaps we may be pardoned if we digress for a moment in order to quote a few of them, taken from a 'View of Frankpledge "cum curia" of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Christ and Blessed Mary the Virgin, held for the manor aforesaid, on Wednesday, to wit, the 25th day of October 1693, before Robert Ffoulkes, gent, seneschal there.' 'We present Richard Thomason, for not removing his midding and cleansing his watercourse in the Northgate street, and doe Amercie him in the sum of 3s. 4d., betwixt and Christmas next, if the said midding be not removed and the watercourse cleansed before this day three weeks, w'ch is a great Anuciance of William Ransford.' So that strict justice may be meted out to all parties, we find the dean and chapter coming under the censure of their own court. 'We present the Deane and Chapter for not repairing the Court-house; and also for a Dunghill before the

Regester office, and we do Amercie them in 13s. 4d.' At another court the dean and chapter were 'Amerced' one shilling for not keeping the stocks in order. The property of the dean and chapter were looked after by this court, for we find them presenting 'Mrs. Swift, Widdow, for suffering p'te of her house in the Abbey Court, w'ch she holds from the Deane and Chapter, to goe to ruine and decay; and we order her to repaire the same before the next Court Leet to be held for this Manner, upon paine of Six pound.' 'Mrs. Swift, Widdow,' seems to have been a troublesome person, and a careless one too, for in the entries transcribed in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, she is twice presented for neglecting to take proper care of the Abbey Well, and on one occasion is ordered to keep it 'duely inclosed, to p'vent the danger of p'sons being drowned or hurt in the s'd Well.' Except the stocks and the cucking-stool, it does not appear that any of the criminal jurisdiction of the abbot had devolved upon the holders of his houses and lands; but the jurisdiction was held under the privileges which had once been his.

The conventual buildings occupied, as above mentioned, nearly one-fourth of the city. They were bounded by the city walls on the north and east, and, perhaps with some exceptions, by Northgate and Eastgate Streets on the remaining sides. The principal entrance was from Northgate Street, through the great Abbey Gate, which still exists. A licence to crenellate his gates and boundary walls was obtained in 1377 by the abbot, from which, and from the character of architecture of the lower part of the edifice, it would appear that its building took place in the fourteenth century. It is true that in

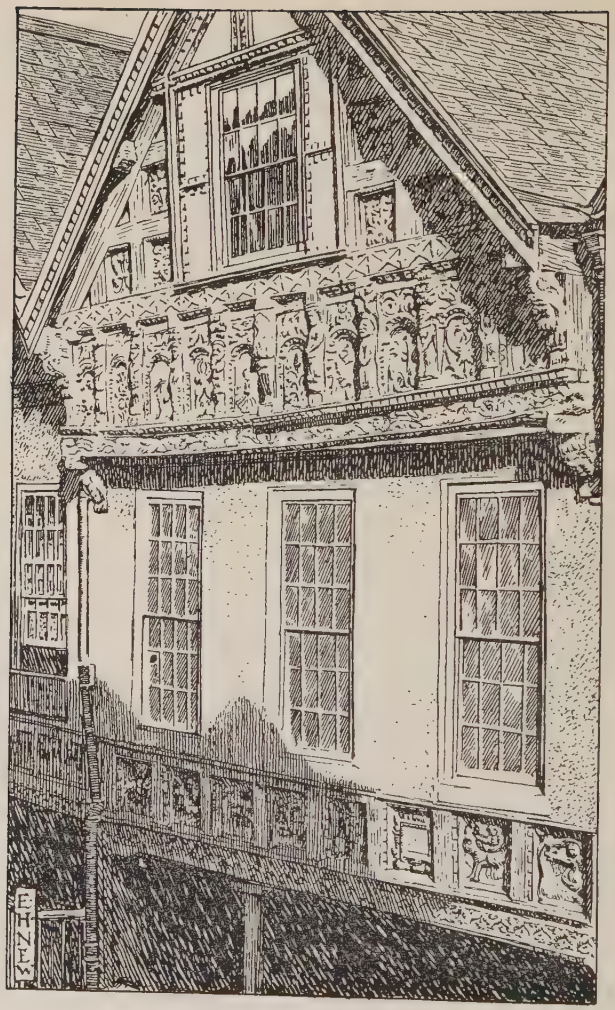
the *Vale Royal* there is a statement, under date 1590, that 'the gate near unto the office door of the Abbey Court was begun the 26th of April, and was finished the 19th of May following.' It is hardly conceivable that such a gateway could have been built in so short a time. The entry in question probably refers to alterations made at that period, perhaps to the building of the upper part of the edifice. There was a porter's lodge on the right hand of the gate, entered by a doorway, now blocked up. On the other side was St. Thomas's Court. The scheme for the Bishopric of Chester clearly contemplates the keeping up of this gate, for provision was made for 'ii porters to kepe the gates and shave the company; xii *li.* per annum,' a somewhat remarkable combination of duties. This gateway led into a space nearly co-extensive with the present Abbey Square. This was surrounded on three sides by the offices of the convent. On the fourth side was the abbot's house, afterwards the Bishop's Palace, of which some parts still remain at the north-west corner of the cathedral. In the north-east angle of this square was St. Thomas's Chapel, where the dean's house now stands. In the north-west angle was another entrance from the city by the Little Abbey Gate. There was a passage through the walls to the kitchen-gardens belonging to the abbey, by the Kale-Yard Gate, which has already been described. East of the refectory, which with the other abbey buildings, still in existence, will be described in connection with the cathedral, was another quadrangle, nearly co-extensive with the later Abbey Court, now a space lying between Abbey Street, the cathedral, and the refectory. This was probably occupied by the domestics. South-west of

the great church was the Chapel of St. Nicholas, which was detached from the general mass of the buildings, and occupied the position of the present Music Hall. Many memories linger round the Great Gate of the abbey, shown in the tailpiece to this chapter. In front of it the booths were erected for the merchants frequenting the abbot's fair. These were covered with reeds, and the abbey had a special charter enabling its occupants to obtain the materials for this purpose from Stanlaw Marsh. It was in front of this gate also that the performers of the Chester Mysteries commenced the display of their pageants. Finally, George Marsh, burnt at Chester for heresy, is said to have been confined, prior to his martyrdom, in a chamber over this gate.

In the square and close to the gate seems to have been a large pond, called the Horse Pool, where the horses of those belonging to or visiting the abbey could be watered. In 1523 there was an inquisition made by the coroners of the city as to the death of a man drowned in this pond: 'Upon view of the Body of Roger Ledsham, Keeper of the Great Gate of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, lately drowned in a certain pit, called "The Horse pole," near to the said gate of the Abbey aforesaid.' The jury 'say on their Oath that the said Roger Ledsham, on Thursday, in the vigil of the Circumcision of our Lord in the year aforesaid, was drowned by simple misfortune in the pit called "le horse pole," and so killed on the day above named by accident and not otherwise.' In the Chapter Records it is stated, under date 1584, that there was paid 'To Hugh Skinner, for the cariage of the filth before the Gate, to fill the hole in ye Court, viij lodes at ijd. the

lode xvjd.' This we may suppose was the account for filling up 'le horse pole,' which then ceased to exist.

ABBEY GATEWAY



BISHOP LLOYD'S HOUSE

CHAPTER VII

THE ANCIENT AND MODERN SEES OF CHESTER

OLD BRIDGE STREET (*after Cuitt*)

CHESTER formed at first a part of the huge Mercian diocese, of which St. Chad was bishop. The bishop had his chair at Lichfield, but the diocese itself covered an enormous area, including, in fact, a large portion of the northern and western districts of England. Though the bishops of this see had their main place of residence at Lichfield, yet it seems that there were also, at quite an early date, cathedrals at Coventry and at Chester. Mr. Hiatt quotes from a work by Sir Peter Leycester, entitled 'Some Antiquities touching Cheshire, faithfully collected out of Authentique Histories, old Deeds, Records, and Evidences,' the statement that 'he finds no mention of a Bishop of Chester before the Norman Conquest,

only we read that Devina, a Scotchman, was made Bishop of Mercia by King Oswy, whereof Cheshire was a small parcel, and that he had his seat at Lichfield, anno Christi 656, from which time there remained a succession of bishops in that see until by doom of canon law all bishops were to remove to the greatest cities in their diocese. And thereupon Peter, Bishop of Lichfield, anno Domini 1075, removed his seat from Lichfield to Chester, and was commonly styled Bishop of Chester.' After the Norman Conquest, the bishops seem to have oscillated between the three cities above-mentioned. In Chester, the Collegiate Church of St. John the Baptist was the early cathedral, so that Chester has still standing two edifices which have held this dignity.

At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII. at first conceived a scheme for uniting the two abbeys of Chester and Wenlock in Shropshire, into a kind of joint collegiate establishment. The draft of this scheme for 'Chestre cum Wenlock' has been published in the *Cheshire Sheaf*. It includes the provision of a 'provost of the Colleage,' who was to be paid £40 per annum, four prebendaries, a reader in 'dyvynytie,' a 'Scholemaster to teache gramer and logike in the greke and laten tonge freely,' an 'ussher,' four 'petycanons,' four men and six boy choristers, a master of the children, a Gospeller and 'a Pystoler.' Twenty-three scholars were to be on the foundation, alms were to be given to a certain amount to the poor, and other monies were to be expended 'in mendying wayes.' Moreover, 'xii pore men decayed by warres or in the kynges service, every of them to have xxd. the weke, whiche amountith to every one of them in the yere

iiii *li.* vi *s.* viii *d.*, in all lii *li.*' This scheme was, however, entirely abandoned. Wenlock was handed over to lay impropriators, and its ruins are now one of the many glories of Shropshire. A scheme for a new see at Chester was then added to those other plans for the increase of the episcopate which came into effect after the rupture of the king with the old religion. No doubt Henry was amply justified in subdividing the enormous diocese of which Chester had formed a part. Even after this division the area allotted to Chester was all too large, and has since, more than once, required further division. Meantime it will be interesting to examine Henry's scheme for the new bishopric, as printed also in the *Sheaf.* The items of this scheme are worth printing *in extenso*, since they afford an interesting example of the reorganisation which took place in certain instances in the midst of the general spoliation which was going on at this period. The draft which, it may be added, is in the king's own handwriting, is in the Public Record Office.

The Ancient and Modern Sees of Chester

Chester

Fyrst a Deane for the corps of his promotion . . . . . xxvii *li* } c *li*
Item iiii *s* by day . . . . lxxiii *li* }
Item vi prebendaryes, ech of them in corps vii *li* xvi *s* viii *d* . . . . lxxiii *li* } cxx *li*
Item to eche of theym vii *d* by day in dividend xii *li* iii *s* iiii *d* . . . lxxii *li* }
Item a Reder in divinitye. (No salary set down for this office.)

Item iiii studentes in divinitie, wherof ii to be founde at Oxford and ii at Cambridge, every of them vi *li* xiii *s* iiii *d* . . xxvi *li* xiii *s* iv *d*

Item xxiiii 'ti scolers to be taught grammer, every of theym iii *li* vi *s* viii *d* . . . lxxx *li*

Item a scholemaister xvi *li* xiii *s* iv *d*, and an ussher viii *li* . . . . xxiiii *li* xii *s* iv *d*

Item vi peticanons to sing in the quyr, every of theym to have yerely vi *li* xii *s* iiii *d* . lx *li*

Item vi singyng men to serve the quyr, every of theym vi *li* xiii *s* iiii *d* . . . xl *li*

Item viii Choristers, every of them iii *li* vi *s* viii *d* yerely . . . . xxvi *li* xiii *s* iiii *d*

Item a maister of the children . . . x *li*

Item a Gospeller viii *li*, a pisteler viii *li*, ii Sextens xii *li* . . . . . xxviii *li*

Item vi old men, beyng old servying men decayed by Warres or in the kynges servyce, every of theym to have vi *li* xiii *s* iiii *d* by the yere . xl *li*

Item to be distributed in Almes among poor householders yerely . . . . . xx *li*

Item for yerely Reparations of the church and manours . . . . . c *li*

Item to be employed in makyng and mendyng of highwayes yerly . . . . . xx *li*

Item to a Stuard of landes vi *li* xiii *s* iiii *d*, and to an Auditor x *li* . . . xvi *li* xiii *s* iv *d*

Item ii porters to kepe the gates and shave the company . . . . . xii *li*

Item to oon butteler for his diete and wages vi *li*, oone cheif Cooke for his wages and diete vi *li*, and oon Under Cooke for hys wages and diete iii *l* vi *s* viii *d* . . . xv *li* vi *s* viii *d*

Item for the deanes expenses in receyving—and surveying the landes. . . . . xl *li*

Item to a Cater, for his wages and diete, and for makying of the booke of accomptes . vi *li*
Item in extraordinary chargis . . . xx *li*
Sum of all chargis . . vii°clxxvi *li*

It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that considerable modifications have been made in this scheme since it was first drawn up. The six prebendaries have become four canons; the reader in divinity, the Gospeller and Epistoller, and the four students to be maintained at Oxford and Cambridge, have all disappeared. So have the porters who combined the duty of barbers, the butler and the chief and under cooks. The alms to be distributed amongst poor householders no longer are available for their original purpose, nor is anything disbursed for the making and mending of highways. Moreover, the huge diocese has undergone several curtailments. In the reign of William IV. that part of the diocese which was in Yorkshire was given to the see of Ripon, then constituted; Westmoreland and the northern part of Lancashire were added to Carlisle; and a portion of North Wales was taken away from the English to be added to a Welsh diocese. The establishment of bishoprics in Manchester and Liverpool further diminished the area of the diocese, until it came to include, as it now does, only the county of which Chester is the principal city.

As already mentioned, the first dean of the newly constituted cathedral was the last abbot of the ancient monastery, *Thomas Clarke*. He apparently occupied his post for about a year, for in 1542 Henry Man, his successor, is receiving the emoluments of the position. In Clarke's will, which was made

shortly after he had been appointed dean, he directs that xl*li.* xij*s.* ij*d.* shall be expended on his funeral, and for that sum a very handsome display ought to have been procured. He bequeathes his 'sole vnto Almightye God, creator and maker off this world, owr Ladye Saynt Marye, and vnto all the hollye companye off heaue', and his bodye to be buryed beffore the highe altar w'tin the quire off ye seyd cathedrall churche.' The first bishop was *John Bird*, D.D., who after having been Provincial of the Carmelites, was made Bishop of Bangor. He preached before Henry VIII. in 1537, and having in his discourse attacked the supremacy of the Pope, so pleased the king as to secure the Bishopric of Chester when that see was created. Having married, he was deprived of the see during the reign of Queen Mary, and subsequently became Vicar of Dunmow, where he is believed to have died. *Cotys* or Cotes, the first Marian bishop, only held the see for two years. It was during his episcopate that Marsh suffered martyrdom. On Cotys's death *Cuthbert Scott*, who had been Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and was a somewhat distinguished scholar, succeeded to the see. He was deprived by Queen Elizabeth. Amongst later bishops there are a few whose names merit special notice. *John Bridgeman*, a graduate of Cambridge, afterwards President of Magdalen College, Oxford, was consecrated in 1619. He was the father of Sir Orlando Bridgeman, the Lord Keeper. In 1623 he issued a series of 'Injunctions set down in the Chapter House of the Cathedral Church of Chester, and decreed to be observed by the Dean and Prebendaries of the same Church, and by every member thereof.' From these it may be gathered that the arrangements for carrying on the services

were in a somewhat disorderly state, and that in other ways things were in a condition loudly calling for reform. The first injunction commences by asserting that 'the absence of the Dean and Chapter of this Church is the cause of much disorder and negligence in other members,' and lays down certain rules for the attendance of the prebendaries, with fines for those who do not fulfil their duties. In another we read that 'because the great negligence of the petty Canons or Singing Men hath done much wrong to God's service, and brought the Church into contempt and obloquy, it is decreed and strictly enjoyned every member of the Quire, namely, the petty Canons, clerks, organist, and choristers, that from henceforth they do not absent themselves from Divine service any day (above six weeks in one year, which are allowed them for their necessary occasions to be absent), upon pain of 2d. to be forfeited by him that shall be absent for every service in this Church. And every one of them that shall come tardy after the Confession is said, or goe out before the end of divine service, shall forfeit 1d. for every such default. And because the defects of the organist, or his neglect in tutoring the choristers, hath unsufferably impeached and impaired the service of God, and almost utterly spoyled the children, he is therefore (besides the censure now to be laid upon him) admonished to present reformation; with protestation that if sensible amendment be not found in the education of the choristers before Michaelmas next, he shall then be utterly deprived of his place in the Church, and another put therein.' It is also ordained that the wages of the cook, butler, cater, baker, and other officials non-existent, should be divided amongst the petty canons and singing-men

whose pay it appears was thought to be much too small. The 'sacrilegious and ravenous disposition of those who have formerly been members of this Church' makes it necessary that in appointing a receiver or treasurer, care should be taken to secure an honest man. It is suggested that better houses should be provided for the prebendaries, those in which they were living being 'base, little, noysom, and unfit for habitation both in regard of site, roome, decay, and manner of building.' Complaint is further made of the uses to which some of the buildings in the Abbey Court are put, and that the 'Gatehouse is become a receptacle of many disorderly people of the city and others, who, taking themselves to be exempted from the power of the city do resort thither, and much wrong themselves and discredit the Government of the Church by their immoderate drinking, gaming, and other wicked expense of time.' Altogether it would appear as if much laxity had crept into the management of the affairs of the cathedral. Bridgeman was Bishop of Chester for thirty-three years, but during the latter part of this time, having been driven from his palace, he lived at Moreton, in Shropshire, the home also of his son Orlando. There he died, and was buried in Kinnersley Church. *John Wilkins*, born in 1614, had been Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. He was brother-in-law to Oliver Cromwell, having married his sister Robina. From this it may be supposed, as indeed was the case, that, at the time of the Great Rebellion, he threw in his lot with the Parliamentarian party. During the protectorate of Richard Cromwell, Wilkins was made Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. The Restoration did not ruin him, though such a result might

have been expected, for during the reign of Charles II. he was made first Dean of Ripon, and afterwards, in 1668, Bishop of Chester. He was a man of considerable gifts in the direction of what was then called natural philosophy, and did much to advance the study of astronomy. One of his books is entitled 'Mercury, or the secret and swift Messenger, shewing how a man may with privacy and speed communicate his thoughts to friends at any distance.' In this there is what reads like a curious anticipation of the idea of the electric telegraph, perhaps even of wireless telegraphy, which may have been his own or may have been quoted from Famianus Strada, to whom he refers in his text. 'Let there be two needles provided, of an equal length and bignesse, being both of them touched with the same loadstone. Let the letters of the Alphabet be placed in the circles on which they are moved, as the points of the compasse under the needle of the Mariner's Chart. Let the friend that is to travaile take one of them with him, first agreeing upon the dayes and hours, wherein they should conferre together: At which times if one of them move the needle of his instrument to any letter of the Alphabet, the other needle, by a Sympathetic, will move unto the same letter in the other instrument though they be never so farre distant. And thus by severall motions of the needle to the letters, they may easily make up any words or sense which they have a mind to expresse.' Another of Wilkins's works is entitled 'The Discovery of a New World, or a Discourse, tending to prove that there may be another habitable World in the Moon, with a Discourse concerning the Possibility of a Passage thither.'

John Pearson (1672-1686), the author of the well-known *Exposition of the Creed*, holds a high place amongst the fathers of the Anglican Church. Before becoming Bishop of Chester, he had been preacher of St. Clement's Church in Eastcheap. It was while holding this appointment that he composed the work just mentioned. Subsequently he was Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, Lady Margaret Professor of Theology and Master of Trinity College. According to Burnet, his mind entirely failed before his death, so 'that he became a child some years before he died.' *Samuel Peploe*, who was made bishop in 1726, is the hero of an incident said to have been accountable for his subsequent promotion. During 'The Fifteen' he was Vicar of Preston. Whilst that town was occupied by the Jacobite soldiery, Peploe was in the habit of reading prayers every day in public and duly reciting the petition for King George. On one occasion, a Jacobite soldier who was present drew his sword and threatened to kill Peploe if he prayed for the usurper. The valorous cleric, nothing daunted, replied, 'Soldier, do your duty, and I will do mine,' and continued the service, including the obnoxious prayer, as if nothing had been said. The threat of the soldier, perhaps never seriously meant, was certainly not carried out. After the discomfiture of the Jacobites, the tale was brought to the ears of George I. It appears to have made an impression even upon that monarch, who is reported to have said, when told of Peploe's courage and loyalty, 'Peplow, Peplow; he shall peep high and be a bishop.' As an immediate reward he was made Warden of the Collegiate Church at Manchester. Subsequently the king fulfilled his promise and made him Bishop of Chester. *Blomfield*, afterwards Bishop

of London, *Sumner*, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and *JacoBson*, who forms one of Dean Burgon's band of 'Good Men,' with Bishop *Stubbs*, afterwards of Oxford, are names on the episcopal roll of Chester which should not be passed over without mention. At least two musicians, formerly connected with the cathedral, must also not be allowed to pass unrecorded. *Thomas Bateson* was organist of the cathedral in 1599, and also master of the choristers. He was one of the greatest composers of madrigals, and in 1604 produced his first set, which he compared to 'young birds feared out of their nest before they be well feathered.' The title runs :—'The first set of English Madrigales to 3, 4, 5 and 6 voices. Newly composed by Thomas Bateson, practitioner in the Art of Musicke and Organiste of the Cathedral Church of Christ in the Citie of Chester, 1604. In London, Printed by Thomas Este.' By the time his 'Second Set' of madrigals came to be published he had left Chester for Dublin, for on the title-page of this latter work he is described as 'Bachelor of Musick, Organist and Master of the Children of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Trinity, Dublin.' *Francis Pilkington*, Bachelor of Music of Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1595, was a singing-man or chorister of Chester Cathedral in 1602, and published a work entitled 'The First Booke of Songs or Ayres of 4 parts; with Tableture for the Lute or Orpherion, with the Violl de Gamba; newly composed by F. Pilkington, Bachelor of Musicke, and Lutenist: and one of the Cathedrall Church of Christ, in the Citie of Chester. London: Printed by T. Este, dwelling in Aldersgate-Streete, and are ther to be sould, 1605.' Whilst on the subject of composers, a third may be

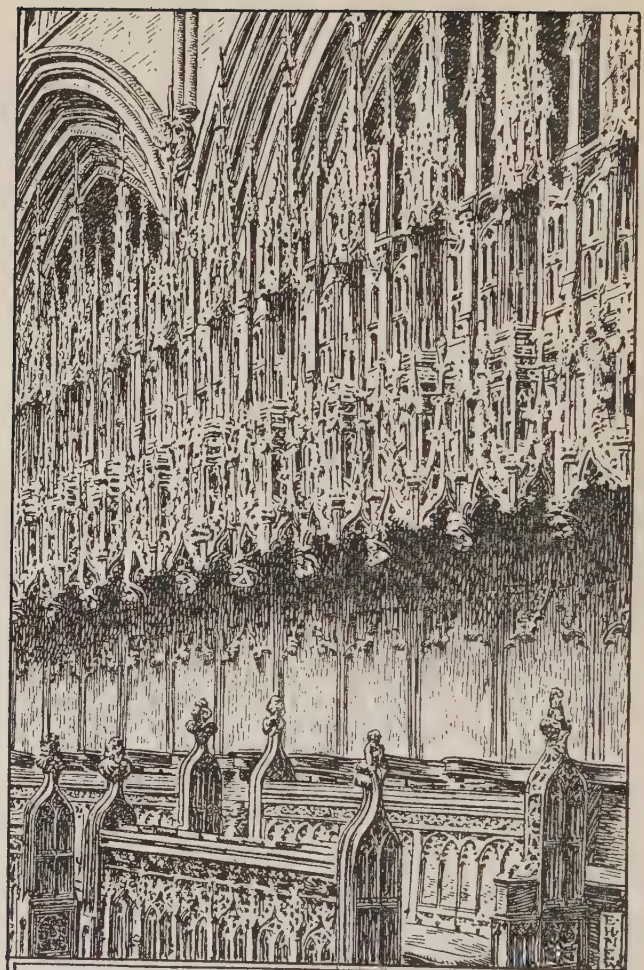
added to the list in the person of the once-celebrated *William Lawes*, though his connection with the cathedral is confined to its being his place of burial. Lawes came of a musical family, for his father was a vicar-choral at Salisbury, and his brother was the composer of the music for Milton's *Comus*, and subsequently of the Coronation Anthem for Charles II. William Lawes was the composer of the music for 'A collection of Psalms for three voices, set to the well-known paraphrase by Sandys,' a work twice alluded to by Pepys in his *Diary*. During the Civil War, Lawes took up arms for the king, and attained to the rank of a captain. In order to ensure his safety, Lord Gerard made him a commissary; but the precaution was in vain, for he was killed at the siege of Chester in 1645. It is said that the king was so distressed at this event that he 'put on particular mourning for his dear servant, William Lawes, whom he commonly called the Father of Music.' Herrick has a poem on this composer amongst his 'Encomiastic Verses.'

UPON MR. WILLIAM LAWES, THE RARE MUSICIAN

Should I not put on blacks, when each one here
Comes with his cypress, and devotes a tear?
Should I not grieve, my Lawes, when every lute,
Viol, and voice is, by thy loss struck mute?
Thy loss, brave man! whose numbers have been hurl'd
And no less prais'd than spread throughout the world:
Some have thee call'd Amphion; some of us
Nam'd thee Terpander, or sweet Orpheus;
Some this, some that, but all in this agree,
Music had both her birth and death with thee.

Lawes was buried in Chester Cathedral, but it does not appear that any monument was erected to indicate the whereabouts of his remains.

BOSS IN THE ROOF OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH



The Stalls ✠ Chester Cathedral ✠✠

CHAPTER VIII

CHESTER CATHEDRAL

CATHEDRAL BEFORE RESTORATION

THE Cathedral of Chester can claim no special eminence amongst its sisters in the land—indeed, leaving the Welsh edifices aside, Chester, as a whole, is perhaps one of the least striking amongst those churches which contain episcopal thrones. Its exterior is that of a modern church from the excessive amount of restoration which has taken place—in justice it must be said, inevitably taken place. It is singularly devoid of ornaments of interest, and it has suffered sorely at the hands of generous donors within. Such is the evil which may be spoken of the church; and this being said, it may be at once admitted that the monastic buildings attached are of the first interest, and that the cathedral itself contains hosts of details worthy of careful study and attention. Those who desire to obtain a good general idea of

the exterior should mount the wall at the Eastgate, and in a few yards to the south will find the best general view of the building (see Frontispiece). From this or from any other point of view no observer who was told that he was looking at a church of the late nineteenth century would have very much reason to be surprised, for the exterior is in fact perfectly new, at present painfully new, though it is expected that no very great number of years will be required to tone down the freshness of its appearance. From the point of view suggested it will be seen that Chester possesses a single central tower, which was, in all probability, intended to carry a spire, an addition which was never carried out. It was at one time supposed that the lower parts of the piers carrying this tower were of the Norman period, but this theory was demolished by the discovery that floriated tombstones of the thirteenth century had been used as the footing of one of them, the mediæval architects thus unconsciously following an example set them by their Roman predecessors. It should be noted that the parapet, pinnacles, and turrets at the corners of the tower are the outcome of Sir Gilbert Scott's imagination, the building upon which he worked having, as may be seen in pictures of the same, nothing but a plain parapet (see initial to this chapter). From the same point should be noted the great south transept, once the church for the parish of St. Oswald, and the singular pyramidal roof of the south aisle of the choir, also due to Sir G. Scott, as will be more fully pointed out when the interior of this part of the building is described. A short distance further along the walls affords other views of the edifice which should certainly be seen, though, in the opinion of the present writer, none of them are as good as that which the

visitor first confronts on approaching the building in the manner suggested above. The west end of the cathedral is possessed of no very striking features, differing thus from edifices like Wells and Lichfield. It must, however, be remembered that the original intention appears to have been that there should be two western towers, the addition of which would have converted this part of the church into a very striking piece of architecture. Instead of the towers we find tacked on to this part of the church the King's School, a modern edifice, the conjunction of which with the cathedral appears to be of advantage to neither. The school owes its foundation to Henry VIII., a figure of whom is over the principal doorway. The church is entered by the south-west porch, a piece of Tudor architecture carrying a parvise, now used as a muniment-room. On leaving the porch for the church it will be noticed how much lower the floor is than the exterior level. On the left, *i.e.* at the west end of the south aisle, and occupying the base of what was to have been the south-west tower, is the Consistory Court of the diocese, shut off from the building by heavy Jacobean doors and screen. The woodwork of the interior is of the same period and of good design. On the north wall hangs the coat of arms of Bishop Peploe, with his initials. The steps which lead from the floor-level to the west door, resting here upon bed-rock, should be ascended in order that a general view of the building may be obtained. The nave arcades, though both of decorated style, are not identical, the southern being the more beautiful of the two. No satisfactory explanation is forthcoming for the difference, which may have been due to the later construction of the northern in imitation of the southern, and not in the

Chester Cathedral

style then in vogue. The triforium and clerestory are combined. The roof is of oak, groined in the manner of a stone roof. It will be noticed that the ribs rise from stone springers of the kind met with in groined stone roofs. These were originally provided no doubt with the idea of adding at some period a stone roof, but this plan was never carried out. In fact, when Sir G. Scott came to restore the church, it was found that the walls would not carry a stone roof. Hence it was decided to carry out the design in wood, and it must be conceded that the result is very satisfactory. Perhaps the effect in the south transept is even more pleasing than that in the nave. The bosses of the roof of the nave contain the arms of his present Majesty, when Prince of Wales; of the Duke of Westminster, Lord Derby, and others connected with the neighbourhood. At the west end of the north aisle is the baptistery, floored with a mosaic pavement representing the sea with fishes swimming therein. The font is a huge quadrilateral receptacle of early Italian work, the original purpose of which is a little doubtful. It may have been a water-tank or even a sarcophagus. 'It came,' says Dean Darby, 'from a ruined church in the Romagna, but it is not known whence it was brought to Venice. It is of a rectangular form, of white marble; in all probability it was originally a village well-head in early Roman times, and afterwards taken by the Christians and carved with symbols for a font. The work is of the Ravenna type of the sixth or seventh century.' At any rate, however interesting it undoubtedly is as a piece of early work, it is quite out of place in a Gothic church, almost as much so as the Jacobean piece of work which it superseded, and which is still to be seen at the top of the west steps. It may, how-

ever, at once be conceded that the font is by no means the most obnoxious of the modern features of the church. The palm in this direction is due to the series of mosaics which cover the wall of the north aisle of the nave. Such a form of decoration is admirable in a church of Byzantine design, but it is wholly foreign to the Gothic spirit in this country, and the aisle itself is certainly not improved by a series of designs which, in a church with whose architecture they harmonised, would be worthy of considerable praise. The wall which is covered with these frescoes is entirely Norman, and in it towards the west end is a doorway leading into the cloisters. At the foot of the western pillar of this doorway will be seen a rudely scratched chequer-board on which the choir-boys of the pre-Reformation period seem to have amused themselves after having been released from lessons in the adjoining cloister. The north aisle has a modern stone roof and a row of debased windows set very high up on account of the conventual buildings placed on the other side of the wall. The nave pulpit is attached to the most easterly pillar on this side of the nave. On the pillar carrying the tower, near this, are the remains of the fresco in which Ripley is represented (see p. 130). Entering the small north transept one is confronted with one of the most obviously Norman features in the church, in the shape of the arches of the triforium on the east wall. The dormitory, or sleeping apartment of the monks, was just outside the north end of this transept, and the approach to the church from that apartment for the prayers of the early morning was made by this passage and a stair communicating with it. Also in the east wall is a blocked Norman doorway which led into the chapel now used as the canon's

vestry, before the alterations subsequently to be mentioned were made in that chamber. This transept contains the modern tomb of Bishop Pearson. Here also are some of the larger pipes of the organ. The instrument itself is placed in a stone gallery supported by marble pillars, which form a screen between north transept and nave. The organ-case is of oak, and, like all the modern woodwork in the church, executed with great skill and taste. The south aisle possesses a series of decorated windows and a number of mural tablets, which though uninteresting in themselves and recording the deaths of persons of no historic importance, are much more in harmony with the general character of the building than the mosaics of the opposite side. The south transept is one of the most remarkable features of the church from its great size, which is about that of the nave. It was for very many years used as a separate church, screened off from the rest of the edifice and called St. Oswald's Church. Students of history do not require to be reminded how fruitful a source of dispute was the question of the share of the laity in some part of the monastic church or in some building closely attached thereto, as, for example, at Sherborne. At Chester disputes were no less frequent than elsewhere, and no effort that the monks could make was successful in ejecting the undesired citizens from their abbey church. The monks built the Chapel of St. Nicholas, where the music hall now stands, for the citizens, but they refused to use it, and finally, in the end of the fifteenth century their right to worship in this part of the church was fully recognised. After the change in religion the south transept continued to be used as a separate church up to 1880, when a new church of St. Thomas having been

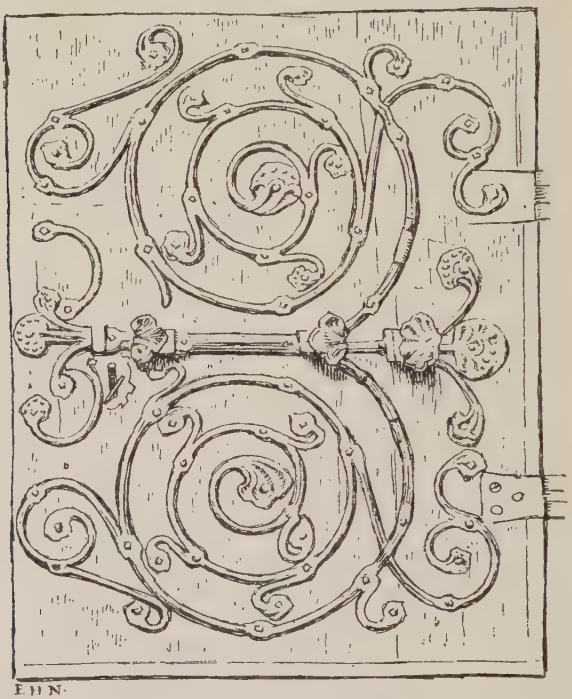
built in another part of the city, the use of the south transept for such purposes was definitely abandoned, the screen separating it from the church was taken down and the whole subjected to a very careful and conservative restoration. There is an interesting document relating to this transept in the Harleian MS. which shows its condition in the first third of the seventeenth century. It is also interesting as recording the change in position of the communion-table from the post-Reformation situation in the middle of the church to the place which it was afterwards to occupy. The document is dated 27th August 1633, and relates to a commission held by order of the Archbishop of York. This commission finds 'that the said Church was very undecent and unsemely, the stalls thereof being patched and peeced and some broken, and some higher than other; and that the said Church was much defiled w'th rushes and other filthiness.' These defects are ordered to be put right and the rushes and filthiness cleared out, and the document proceeds: 'And because the Comunion table there was found to bee undecent and unscemely, not befitting soe holy an use, they did Order and enjoyne the said Churchwardens to p'uide A decent and scemely table for the Comunion, and likewise to pave or flagge the Isle w'ch they call their Quire, wherein the Co'ion table standeth; and that the seats adjoyning to the wall beyond the Comunion Table bee removed & taken away and the comunion Table sett upp close to the wall. And that a decent Raile w'th Pillasters bee made, one yard in height, reaching from the Comunion Table to the pillar against w'ch the pulpit leaneth, and soe from that pillar to the other pillar ouer against that, and soe up to the Comunion Table againe.' The transept consists

Chester Cathedral

of a central part and aisles, the latter at right angles to those of the nave. The large south window is of Sir A. Blomfield's design, and a rather successful piece of work. Along the east wall are the remains of the divisions between what were chantry chapels. It is known that there were four of these, and that two of them were dedicated to St. Nicholas and St. Mary Magdalene respectively, but which these were, and what were the ascriptions of the other two is not known. Dean Darby thinks that the following statement 'John Arceway, who had been ten times successively mayor of Chester, and died 1278, is said to be buried before St. Leonard's altar, in the south part of the church, where he founded two chantry chapels,' may point to one of these chapels, and if so, would give us its dedication. The monument of the late Duke of Westminster, with a recumbent effigy in white marble, surrounded by metal railings with heraldic banners at its corners, is placed in this transept, where there is also a mural memorial to officers of the 22nd or Cheshire Regiment. The choir and its aisles is generally approached from the north transept through a pair of Spanish gates, less incongruous than some of the other objects deposited in the cathedral. A similar pair cuts off the south choir-aisle from the body of the church. On entering the north choir-aisle, a small fire-place, the only one in the building, should be noticed. This may have been used for baking the altar-breads, or perhaps for keeping hot the charcoal which would be used in the thuribles. On the opposite side a railed depression in the floor shows the level of the older church. It will be noticed that one of the pillars of the choir arcade rests upon the capital of one of the Norman pillars which preceded it, and has been used as a footing for

its successor. Here, as in scores of other places in the cathedral, and particularly in the cloisters, we have an example of the careless manner in which mediæval architects dealt with the work of their predecessors. Our modern restorers might quote many precedents for their performances in our churches and cathedrals. In the floor of this part of the church are some old tiles collected from various places and laid here for safety. Between the pillars at this point and in the corresponding position on the opposite side have been placed the remains of the stone screen which formerly separated the choir from the nave, and which was superseded by the modern wooden screen which now exists. In the north wall beyond the fire-place is the entrance to the little chapel, now used as the canon's vestry. This was originally of Norman construction, had an apsidal termination, of which traces can still be seen near the present door, and was approached by the blocked doorway already noticed in the north transept. At a later period the chapel was enlarged to its present size, the old entrance closed and a new one made. In this chapel is one of the most beautiful pieces of work which the cathedral contains, in the shape of the iron work on a press at its west end. Dean Darby says that it was 'wrought by Thomas de Leghtone in the thirteenth century. The character of its hinges is very like that of the hinges of the press in the Church of St. Jacques at Liége, which are figured in Mr. J. Starkie Gardner's *Ironwork*. Mr. Gardner points out that "the distribution of richly stamped iron work of the French type in England is rather remarkable," and that "the specimens are so limited in number that they might well have been the work of a single

smith." This smith seems to have been Thomas de Leghtone, and it is probable that he had studied French examples, particularly the grille at St. Denis,



WROUGHT-IRON WORK

which closely resembles the one which he made for Westminster Abbey.' This ironwork is worthy of all praise and should receive the most careful attention. In this chapel also hangs a curious

lantern which was discovered in the passage leading from the floor of the chapter-house to its triforium. Beyond this chapel and still on the north wall of the aisle is the memorial tablet of Dean Howson, which should not be overlooked. Not that the tablet itself is of any intrinsic interest, but that it commemorates a man whose industry and energy raised the large sum of money necessary for the restoration of the cathedral. That he made no mistakes in carrying out his task of restoration cannot be claimed for him, but to him Chester and the visitors to that ancient city owe the possession of a building which if rather painfully new in appearance, is at least sound and strong and water-tight, and capable of discharging its duties for many years to come. Under this tablet is one to the Clerk of the Works, and somewhat further on a memorial of Bishop JacoBson, as he wrote his name, and as it is not inscribed on his monument. Beyond this the Norman work terminates, and the apsidal end of the chapel of that date is marked by a semicircular series of black slabs in the floor. Further on another door in the wall leads to the triforium, and on the opposite side in the wall is a double piscina of the decorated period, which marks nearly the eastern limit of the second aisle chapel on this side. Beyond this we enter the final extension made during the perpendicular period, an extension which not merely for the second time increased the length of the aisle but took in two windows of the Lady Chapel itself. The most easterly of these remains still as an unglazed window between the aisle and the Lady Chapel; the western was so altered as to become a means of communication between the aisle and the Lady Chapel. To afford

this means of communication was probably one of the reasons for this alteration in the building, but it was also obviously rendered advisable by the condition of the wall itself, which was failing and required support. Under the window between the aisle and the chapel is the monument of Bishop Graham.

The Lady Chapel is early English in period, and has two sedilia and a double piscina. The eastern wall is decorated with a mosaic. The bosses of the roof are of considerable interest. That to the east represents Our Lord in glory; the central is the Blessed Virgin and Child; and the western, most interesting of all, represents the martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury. It will be remembered that Henry VIII., after breaking with the old religion, ordered all memorials of St. Thomas to be destroyed. Here and there one has escaped, and this amongst the number. At the west end is all that remains of the once magnificent shrine of St. Werburgh. Up to recent years a large part of this shrine formed part of the Bishop's throne; but, on the erection of the present wooden throne, the fragments found here and elsewhere were pieced together, the deficiencies being made good with perfectly plain pieces of stone, so that all that remains of the old work can be easily identified. In Webb's time 'there only remains now of that shrine of St. Werburgh one fair stone in the middle of the church, where was lately buried one worthy bishop of the same diocese, called Bishop Downham.' This account describes the condition of the shrine up to the restoration just alluded to. The shrine itself, which obviously must have replaced an earlier structure of the same kind, for it belongs to the decorated period, is of two stages. The lower,

solid portion, is provided with niches, now empty, for the reception of figures. The flat surface forming the upper part of this portion was doubtless the situation of the actual repository of the relics. It is rather high, and as there is no trace of any stone stair, pilgrims to the shrine can have had direct access to it, if at all, only by means of a wooden stair. The upper stage of the shrine consists of a series of arches, or rather did so consist, for they are not all perfect. Around the upper part is a row of gilded figures, all headless. It is quite clear that the stone-work of the shrine must have extended to a much greater height than at present. After the Reformation the Lady Chapel was used for a long time as the Consistory Court of the Bishop, and this purpose it served even during the reign of Queen Mary, when Catholic worship was temporarily restored, for it was in this chapel that George Marsh was tried, and condemned to be burned, in 1555.

The south aisle of the choir terminates now apsidally. Prior to Scott's restoration it terminated in a similar manner to its fellow of the opposite side. It is this apse which is covered by the very singular roof to which attention was called when the exterior of the church was under consideration. Scott gives in his *Architectural History of Chester Cathedral* a long account of the discoveries which led him to build the chapel as it now stands. In so doing he reverted to what he believed, perhaps perfectly correctly, to have been the plan at the time of Edward I. The peculiar roof, of which mention has been made, is a feature, he says, 'which, though unique in England, is in several instances found in France, especially at Norrey, in Normandy, where the radiating chapels at the east

end are precisely similarly roofed.' Of these chapels he gives a drawing in the work above mentioned, showing the similarity of their roofs to that which he has built at Chester. In looking at this roof, it must be remembered that here we have in no true sense of the word a restoration, but simply the architect's idea of what very likely had been the condition at one era of the church's history, but a condition which later builders had superseded. Whether such a treatment of a historic building is legitimate is at least open to grave doubt. In the remainder of the south aisle are two tombs of some interest. One is an altar tomb, with some considerable remains of gilding and painting about it. Whose it is is not known. 'The most preposterous theory is that it is the tomb of Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, who abdicated in 1103. The workmanship and design of the monument at Chester clearly are of the fifteenth century, and the Emperor died in the year 1106. As a matter of fact, Henry IV. completed the building of the Romanesque cathedral of Spires, in Bavaria, and was buried in it at his death, which took place in that city. In all probability the tomb marks the resting-place of one of the abbots of St. Werburgh's' (Hiatt).

The other tomb, placed near the gates of the aisle, is that of Ranulph Higden, author of the *Polychronicon*, who died somewhere about 1360. It is a curious fact that when this tomb was opened some years ago hazel twigs were found on the surface of the wrappings of the body. A similar discovery has been made elsewhere in this country, but the reason for the custom is not clear. We now approach the consideration of the choir, which is by far the most beautiful thing in the church, and alone would well

repay the journey to Chester. Its architecture belongs to the period of transition between the early English and decorated styles; and undoubtedly the most remarkable feature of the edifice itself is the very elaborate triforium, separated from the clerestory, not combined with it, as in the nave. At the east end the choir is separated from the Lady Chapel by a small arch, above which is a window. The communion table, which is made of different kinds of wood brought from the Holy Land, is elaborately carved, but is far too suggestive of the domestic sideboard to be impressive, and the mosaic reredos cannot be said to be particularly effective. The two candlesticks, of great size, on either side of the sacrarium, are really fine examples of Italian *cinque cento* style, and though of foreign origin do not at all jar upon the eye in a Gothic cathedral. The Easter sepulchre and an aumbry on the north, and the restored sedilia on the south, should be noticed. Of the modern pulpit, little need be said, and of the floor it may be well to say nothing. Let us pass to the consideration of the woodwork, the chief crown and glory of the choir and of the cathedral. In the first place, it must be borne in mind that parts of this are quite modern. The Bishop's throne is entirely new, so is the western face of the screen between the choir and the nave, so are many other smaller portions, to some of which attention will yet be called. But of these portions, and of the restored parts of the old woodwork (see plate, p. 152), it may fairly be said that they are far more successful than most of such attempts to reproduce ancient effects, as successful perhaps as we can expect woodcarving to be in these degenerate days of art. It seems as if the existence in the church of such noble specimens has acted as a spur to the modern workmen,

Chester Cathedral

and induced them to put forth unusual efforts to vie with the ancient models. In the next place it must not be forgotten that the restoration of the old portions of the woodwork was a task of great difficulty and labour. The barbarous taste of a bygone age had caused all the exquisite tabernacle work over the stalls, belonging to the early fifteenth century, to be painted green, and all these parts had to be boiled in order that the obnoxious coating might be removed. Bearing these points in mind, and gazing upon the result of the labours of the past and the present, no one can fail to extend the highest measure of praise to all concerned in the production. Apart from the tabernacle work of stalls and screen, there are some other parts of the carving to which special notice should be paid. In the first place, examine the bench end by the dean's stall, the first on the right at the western end. This represents a Jesse tree, and immediately in front of the end is a curious figure, shown in the tailpiece to this chapter, of a man with a staff in his hand, perhaps a pilgrim. Then look at the opposite bench-end, belonging to the sub-dean's stall, which has on it clusters of grapes and pelicans, and in front of it a pelican in her piety, the whole in allusion to the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. Another old bench-end on the north side represents the devil as a roaring lion swallowing an avaricious man. On the other side of the passage is a modern piece of carving, representing a man playing a fiddle, the face being that of a former precentor. Here a comparison may be instituted between the ancient and the modern work ; and though there is no doubt which bears off the palm, the modern work stands very well beside its ancient brother. On the same side of the choir is another admirable piece of carving,

representing the devil tipping up the mug of ale which a toper is about to swallow with undisguised relish. The misereres are also very interesting. It ought not to be necessary to tell people that these were simply rests used during the chanting of certain parts of the Divine Office, as they are used at this moment in monasteries in this and other countries; but so many wild stories are told about these and other pieces of monastic buildings and furniture by those who have never taken the trouble to go to a living monastery and see for themselves what the places and things were for, that it is perhaps as well to be specific and set down the actual purpose of the miserere. In almost all churches of importance these supports are more or less elaborately carved, and Chester is no exception to the rule. They seem to have been the work of at least three hands, of whom one was a poor, a second a mediocre, and the third a superlative artist. It should be added that some of them are of modern workmanship. It is undesirable to burden these pages with a complete list of these pieces of carving, of which, by the way, an account has appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Chester Archæological Society. They should be examined in detail by those specially interested in such matters, and for those who have little time or inclination to study such things, the carving of St. Werburgh and the geese, which Mr. New has represented in his drawing, may perhaps be recommended as a good example. This miserere commemorates a legend about the patron saint of the church, told by Bradshaw in his life of St. Werburgh: 'The legend tells how at Weedon, in Northamptonshire, wild geese made a great destruction upon the abbey land, devouring the cornes and fruites.' St. Werburgh, on

complaint being made by the tenants, commanded one of the abbey servants to drive the geese, and 'bring them home to her place there to be pynned and punished for their trespass.' This was done, to the amazement of the messenger, the wild geese following in all obedience, 'their wings trailing, mourning in their manner, abiding one and all her

MISERERE IN CATHEDRAL—THE STORY OF ST. WERBURGH

will and judgment.' The left-hand portion of the miserere represents the geese with 'high voices calling on St. Werburga for grace and pardon of their offence.' They are released on promise of good behaviour, but a greedy retainer of the abbey steals one of their number. The rest come flying back to complain. Inquiry is made; and on the right the culprit is portrayed confessing to the abbess his theft. The central group represents her restoring the missing goose to its companions, who are fluttering about overhead. This is done, although it had been roasted and eaten the same night that it was stolen; and when asked for, only the bare bones could be brought. Yet, by virtue of the holy maiden's benediction,

'the bird was restored, and flew away full soon' (Morris). One object of devotion, which formerly stood in the choir, naturally enough disappeared at the time of the Reformation, and that was a miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin, for the *Speculum Carmelitanum*, quoted by Waterton in his *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, relates that 'in the south part of the choir, at the head of the tomb of the hermit Goddestald, stood an image of the Blessed Virgin Marye, by which God wrought many miracles.' Near the choir was another object of devotion, also gone, of which Waterton says, 'Henry de Sutton, nineteenth abbot, died May 8, 1413, and was buried in the broad aisle, close to the north side of the south pillar, next to the entrance into the choir, before a painting formerly called Our Ladye of Pitie.'

Having examined the principal objects of interest in the body of the church itself, it will next be advisable to visit the cloisters and the portions of the conventual buildings still in existence which are connected with them. Many of these have of course disappeared, but the parts which remain are of great interest and deserve careful examination. The cloisters were the last part of the buildings to be erected, and in many places it is possible to see how the architect disregarded the work of his predecessors and ruthlessly cut them about in order to carry out his own designs. Entering the south walk of the cloisters by the west door and turning to the east, there are to be seen along the south wall a series of recesses in the wall which are supposed to have been for the reception of the library of the monks. Opposite to these on the north side are the windows looking out upon the cloister garth. This was not

apparently used in monastic times as a place of burial, for the cemetery of the brothers was outside the church, and the abbots appear to have been interred in the church or in the cloister itself. A row of pillars here divides the cloister into compartments where were some of the carrels or recesses in which the monks sat at study or writing manuscripts for their own or some other library. At the east end of this walk is another entrance to the church, where there is what remains of a Norman doorway cut away at the side by later buildings. Turning now along the east walk itself, a blocked doorway leading formerly into the north transept is first met with. Beyond this are stone seats, and then the entrance to the vestibule of the chapter-house is reached. This is of the early English period and leads to the chapter-house, now used as a diocesan library and not open to the public. Like its vestibule, the chapter-house belongs to the early English period, and is a very beautiful example of that style of architecture in its earliest times. The room is rectangular, and has a very fine triforium and clerestory combined, the shafts which traverse them being tied to the wall at mid-height. The entrance to the triforium is by a staircase at the south-east corner. This was hidden for a long time by the bookcases which formerly lined the walls. When these were replaced by the present dwarf cases extending at right angles from the walls, the entrance to the triforium was exposed, and in it was discovered the lantern which now hangs in the canons' vestry. Amongst the books in the library are a Sarum Missal, an early copy of the *Polychronicon*, and other manuscripts and printed books of value and interest. Under the chapter-house were buried the Norman Earls of Chester. Re-

turning from the chapter-house through its vestibule to the cloisters, the next passage is that now called the Maiden Aisle. This was the parlatorium of the monks, a place where conversation was permitted. The wall and window at the far end are not original, for this passage was intended to lead and actually did lead to the graveyard. At the end and on the north side is a doorway which leads into the green around the cathedral, and also into a fine vaulted room, now used for the storage of coal, as to the original use of which there is considerable doubt. Some have believed that this was the calefactory or room to which at certain times the monks might repair for the purpose of warming themselves. It is difficult to believe that this can have been so, for there is no trace of fireplace or chimney, nor, since there was a room above it, could the smoke have been allowed to escape, as was commonly the case in mediæval buildings, through a louvred chamber at the summit of the room. The last doorway in this walk is that which leads to the dormitory or sleeping-room of the monks. It is lit by a quatrefoil window, and a second aperture of a similar character, blocked up when the cloisters were built, exists higher up the staircase. These stairs now lead to a flat stone roof visible from the abbey precincts, or from Abbey Street. Here, of course after the dissolution, there were for a time several shops, which have now disappeared. Within the memory of man also there stood here two of the arches which formerly supported the roof of the dormitory. The window in the wall on the east side is not original, but an insertion after the remains of the dormitory had disappeared. Turning into the north walk of the cloisters, the stone beadings beneath

which the towels of the monks hung, should first be noticed. They are on the wall opposite to the windows. Just beyond them is the stone shelf on which stood the lavabo or washing-trough. It is not known of what material this was made, perhaps it was a wooden trough which stood upon the shelf. At any rate it was not, as at Gloucester, part and parcel of the shelf itself. The shelf originally projected beyond the opening which is next encountered, and was cut away when that was made. This entrance is no part of the plan of the monastery, but was made by one of the deans, in order to afford a ready way from his house into the church. It is important to bear this in mind, for otherwise it is impossible to understand the room now entered from this passage and called the refectory. As a matter of fact the original frater-house or refectory was cut into two unequal parts by this passage, so that we must think of it as having consisted of the room at present called by that name, of the passage itself and of the room, unrestored and indeed roofless, which lies to its west. All these portions formed one vast apartment. In the larger part to the east, the King's school was for a long time held, and many well-known persons, amongst whom may be mentioned Bishop Thomas Wilson, of Sodor and Man, the author of the *Sacra Privata*, Sir Peter Dennis, George Ormerod, and the late Randolph Caldecott, received their education within its walls. It is now used as a place for choir-practices. The most beautiful object in this room is the reader's pulpit with the stair leading up to it, the whole of the finest early English architecture and reminding one of the similar structure at Beaulieu in Hants. From this eminence the lector read passages from the Scriptures and the Fathers, during meals,

and the intervals between the lower parts of the arches were no doubt formerly occupied by stone book-rests to support the heavy volumes from which he read. On the other side of the passage is the rest of the refectory. This was formerly provided with a gallery, and at a late period of the history of the

The Norman Chamber

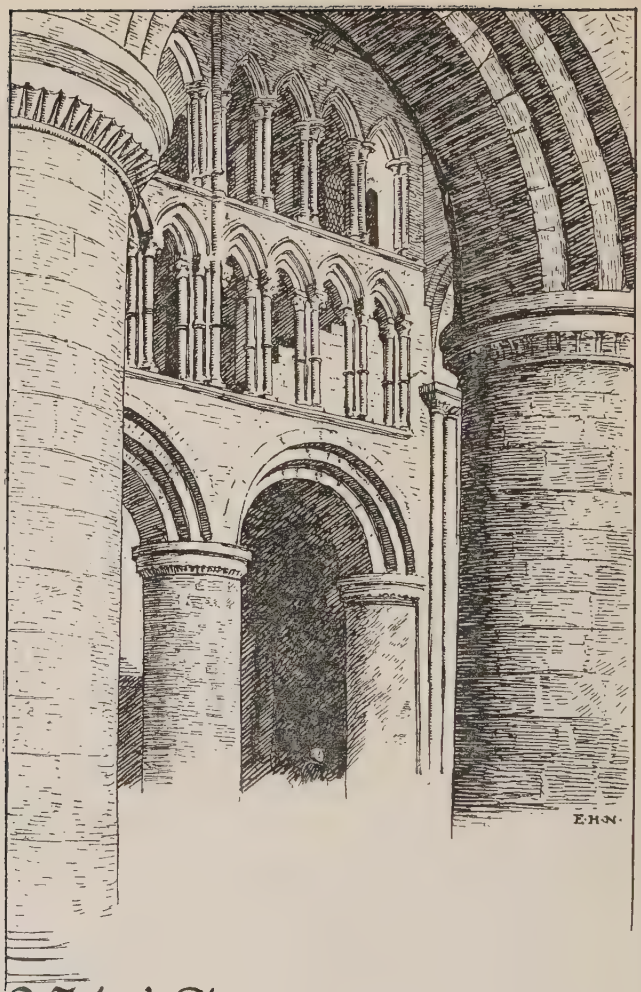
abbey, when the monks had decreased in number, this gallery was used as their refectory, the body of the hall being only occupied on great occasions and when many guests were gathered together. The original doorway leading to the refectory, a piece of work of rich early English architecture, is a noticeable feature in the north cloister. On one of the bosses

will be noticed the arms of Cardinal Wolsey, with the hat of his dignity, fixing the date at which these walls were built as they now stand. The next doorway in the same walk of the cloister is that which led to the kitchens of the abbey. We now reach the fourth or west walk of the cloister, and on the side facing the garth is another row of pillars where formerly was a second set of carrels. On the other side is the door of entrance to what is called the Norman chamber, a fine vaulted room of that period. Many uses have been assigned for this room, but it does not require much knowledge to see that it was the cellarium or storehouse of the monastery. Here not merely wine and ale, but salt meat and fish and other commodities would be stored for the use of the house. Above this chamber was the hospitium or guest-house, which has entirely disappeared. Beyond this is a doorway which led to the abbot's house outside the church. In the construction of the cloisters little heed has been paid to this doorway, for the architect has set a pillar right across the centre of it. Thus around the cloisters are grouped the greater part of the buildings still remaining to show us how and where the monks of the great Abbey of St. Werburgh lived. Of the abbot's house itself, afterwards for some time the bishop's palace, but little is left. In the corner of the baptistery of the church will be seen a small doorway. This leads to a newel staircase from which a room is reached, which was part of this building and was used for a long time as the private chapel of the bishop. It possesses a Jacobean screen of good workmanship, and the communion-rails are still *in situ*. The place is full of dust and dirt and wholly unused. Those who penetrate to it will see as they descend the

stairs a very obvious top-light of a hall, which in fact served that purpose whilst the house was still occupied by the bishops of Chester as a place of residence.

Chester Cathedral

CARVING ON BENCH-END IN CHOIR



St John's Ch:

CHAPTER IX

OTHER RELIGIOUS HOUSES AND CHURCHES

ST. JOHN'S TOWER

CHESTER, during Catholic days, possessed several houses of religious men and women, to use the technical phrase by which those persons who lived in community under a rule are distinguished from those other ecclesiastics who lived in the world and were called seculars. Of the religious houses the Benedictine nunnery of St. Mary first deserves note. According to some writers this establishment was in existence prior to the Conquest. It is certain that in Domesday Book mention is made of a monastery of St. Mary, near St. John's Church. This, it has been thought, was merged in the later nunnery, which was undoubtedly founded by Ranulph Gernons. Canon Morris, however, regards this idea as unfounded, and has come

to the conclusion that there was no nunnery in Chester prior to the Norman foundation just mentioned. The second prioress was Lucy, a daughter of the founder of the house, which received a number of gifts from him and from other later benefactors. At the time of the dissolution, the house contained a prioress and eleven other nuns, who all received pensions. The site of the convent was north-west of the castle walls, and the buildings and land with some of the properties belonging to the community were granted to the family of Brereton, of Handford. By this family the buildings continued to be occasionally occupied up to the time of the siege, when they were destroyed. A pointed archway which formed part of the nunnery is now in the Grosvenor Park.

The Franciscans are found to have been seated in Chester early in the reign of Henry III. Their house was near the Water Gate, stood, says Pennant, 'in the yacht field, near the place occupied by the new linen hall.' The 'yacht field' occupied that part of the town now known as Stanley Place, a piece of property which, according to an advertisement of the period in the *Chester Courant*, was opened up for building purposes in 1778. The buildings of the friary included a church, of which (20 Henry VIII.), no doubt owing to the extreme poverty of the brothers, the nave and three of the aisles were let to the merchants and sailors of Chester as a place for the storage and repair of sails and other things belonging to their ships. At the time of the dissolution the sale of goods and 'stuff' belonging to this house realised £6, 4s. 8d., but the debts of the house were then £11, 8s. 11d. The site of this house, together with those of the other two friaries, yet to be mentioned, was granted to one John Cooke,

citizen and salter of London. After passing through several hands, the property came into the possession of the Brereton family, by whom the buildings, which continued, little altered, to exist up to the middle of the seventeenth century, were occupied as a dwelling-house.

Other Religious Houses and Churches

The Dominicans had a house in Chester, but its precise situation is not known. The north end of Nicholas Street was once known as Blackfriars' Lane, which would seem to point to the fact that the house was near this spot. In any case it was in St. Martin's parish. At the time of the dissolution this friary contained only a prior, sub-prior, and three brethren. The Carmelites were established in Chester in 1279 by Thomas Stadham or Stathum. Their house was also in St. Martin's parish, in the south-west part of the city, and near the street still called White-friars. The church had a steeple erected in 1496, 'of great height and beauty, the only sea-mark for direction over the bar of Chester.' This was taken down in 1597. At the time of the dissolution this house contained a prior, a sub-prior, and eight brethren. A mansion was built on this site by Sir Thomas Egerton, and it was in one of its rooms, let to a showman, that the terrible explosion took place, which gave to the adjacent passage the name of the Puppet-Show Entry. This occurrence took place on November 5th, 1772, and the accident was due to the explosion of gunpowder stored in the room of a grocer under that in which the puppet-show itself took place. Fifty-three sufferers were admitted to the Chester Infirmary, and about the same number were treated at their own houses. Of the whole number twenty-three died.

Before leaving the subject of the friars, it may

be mentioned that there is now again a house of Franciscans in the city. The friary and church stand opposite to the Grosvenor Museum. The foundation stone of the church was laid in 1862. A year later, when the building was nearly complete, it was entirely destroyed by a hurricane. The present building was opened by the late Cardinal Manning in 1875. Two charitable foundations remain to be mentioned before we pass to the consideration of the churches of the city. The first of these is the hospital of St. John the Baptist, situated outside the North Gate. This was founded by Ranulph Blundeville, 'for the sustentation of poore and sillie persons.' When its charter was reconfirmed by Edward I., the mastership of the hospital was given to the prior of Birkenhead and to his successors. Attached to the hospital there was of course a chapel, the ancestor of the present 'Little St. John's.' An inquisition of the 15th Edward III. finds 'that there ought to be and have accustomed to be, in the said hospital, three chaplains to say mass daily, two in the church and the third in the chapel, before the poor and feeble sustained in the said hospital; and that one lamp ought to be sustained at mass every day in the said hospital, and to burn every night in the whole year; and that thirteen beds competently clothed should be sustained in the said hospital, and receive thirteen poor men of the same city, whereof each shall have for daily allowance, a loaf of bread, a dish of pottage, half a gallon of competent ale, and a piece of fish or flesh as the day shall require.' How such an institution succeeded in escaping the notice and the avarice of the Tudor sovereigns is a little difficult to understand, but it did, and continued on its way until the

siege, when it was pulled down, lest it should afford cover for the enemy without the walls. On the Restoration, the chapel and hospital were rebuilt by Colonel Roger Whitley, to whom the estate had been granted for his life and to his successors for twenty years after his death. The management of the hospital then passed into the hands of the Mayor and Corporation, and subsequently came under the Municipal Charity Trustees. The houses of the hospital have been rebuilt and lie behind the buildings of the Blue Coat School, established by Bishop Stratford in 1700, and housed here seventeen years later. The present buildings were erected in 1854.

St. Giles's Hospital, Boughton, was one of the many houses established in the middle ages for the relief of lepers, and as it was for the reception of these undesirable neighbours it was placed outside the city. It was founded by Ranulph Blundeville, and was to benefit by certain privileges which Canon Morris details from the reply to a writ of *quo warranto* of 15 Henry VII. From every sack (whether carried on a cart, or on a horse, or in any other way) of wheat, vetches, or barley one handful; oats, or malt, two handfuls; one cheese from every horse load or cart-load of cheese; one salmon from every load; of other fish, as sparlings, flukes, eels, five from every horse's pannier, and one from every man's load; one double handful of fruit from a horse load, and three handfuls from a cart. A fishing boat free in the Dee, three stalls in the Dee called 'syngelyn' (single line): not to be amenable to the Justice, sheriff, or other officer of the earl, but to their own court. The hospital and chapel were completely destroyed in the Civil War. Canon Morris points out that the hospital, owing to its connection with

the Abbey of St. Werburgh, had a bakery, which was called St. Giles's Bakehouse, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Abbey. It gave the name of Baker's Entry to a passage from Eastgate Street.

After the present-day cathedral the most important and interesting church is the dispossessed cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which, though shorn of many of the glories which it once possessed, is still full of matters to interest the archæologist. According to an ancient tradition, 'King Æthelred, minding to build a church, was told that where he should see a white hind, there he should build a church; which hind he saw in the place where St. John's Church now standeth; and in remembrance whereof, his picture was placed in the wall of the said church, which yet standeth on the side of the steeple towards the west, having a white hart in his hand.' (*Vale Royal.*) This Æthelred, it is thought, was probably Æthelred, King of the Mercians from 674-704. On the other hand, it has been maintained that the founder was Æthelred, the Earl of Mercia, who was husband of Aethelflaed, whose name has several times been mentioned in these pages. If so, its date would be later, for this Æthelred died in 912. In 1860 fifty Saxon coins, belonging to the reign of Eadweard the Elder, son of Aelfred the Great, were found during some excavations at the west end of the church. They were in an excellent state of preservation, and were thought by the late Mr. T. Hughes to have been foundation coins. If this be the case it would strengthen the probability that it was the Earl and not the King of Mercia who was responsible for the foundation of the church. Another evidence of its Saxon history is found in a number of very curious crosses which were dug up amongst the ruins

of the choir and its chantry chapels in 1870. Of these crosses still to be seen in the church, the present Bishop of Bristol said, 'It is more easy to describe these crosses negatively than positively. They are un-Anglian, un-Scottish, un-Irish, un-Scandinavian, they resemble most closely a head of one of the few great crosses left in Wales, known as the Maen-Achwynfan, and the fragments and head of a cross at Diserth.' The bishop assigns these crosses to a date of about 830, and, if he be correct in this view, it would be an argument in favour of the earlier foundation of the church. In any case the church, then existing on this site, was visited by King Edgar, on the occasion when he was rowed up the river by his eight sub-kings. In 1075 it was repaired by Earl Leofric, who was also a benefactor of the Abbey.

It has already been mentioned that Peter, the first Norman bishop of the huge diocese of which Coventry and Lichfield were also cathedral towns, made St. John's his cathedral, when he took up his residence in Chester. It is to him that we owe the Norman parts of the present fabric. This church was always the property of seculars, that is to say it was in the hands of a dean and chapter of ordinary secular priests, and not attached to any religious order of monks or friars. Each member of the chapter, as well as the dean, possessed his own house. This arrangement, well known prior to the change of religion, was called collegiate. There were seven canons, and, owing to the manner of their life, they had no refectory or common dormitory or other such buildings. The court or enclosure around which the houses of the dean and canons lay probably occupied the position of the present St. John's house and rectory. At the time of the dissolution the value of the revenues

of St. John's was equal to about £1600 per annum of our money. It may possibly have been on account of its small endowment that St. John's was passed over and the Abbey Church decided upon as the cathedral of the new foundation. Had St. John's been chosen, it is the Abbey Church which, in all probability, would have disappeared. As things were, the marvel is that St. John's, or at least a part of it, is left to us. This is due to the fact that the parishioners thought that part of the church might serve for their religious services, and eventually obtained a grant of about one-fourth of the original edifice from Queen Elizabeth. As to the rest of it, that was served in the same way in which so many other majestic edifices throughout the country were served. The commissioners of Henry and Edward had a ready way with churches. After the valuables contained inside the edifice had been removed and converted into cash, the lead was stripped from the roof, and melted down into pigs of a convenient size for removal, whereupon that too was sold. The carcase of the church was probably granted to some needy or greedy retainer, and he in turn made some money out of it by using it or letting it out for use as a stone quarry. In the case of St. John's the commissioners of Edward VI. made a quite characteristic report which may here be transcribed, 'The bodye of the same churche thowghte suffi'ent to s've the said p'ishoners w^{t} the charge of xx *li*, so that the hole chunsell w^{t} the twoo isles may be reserved for the King's ma^{tie} having upon them lead to the quantatie of xxiij ffothers.—Bells belonging to the said College, and as yett hanging in the churche of ye said college—ffyve. Whereof it is thowghte sufficient to contynew one.—And ye resydew may be

taken for ye King's magistie, and worth by estimacion MMMVc lb.' Mr. Leach mentions in his book on English Schools at the Reformation that part of the revenues of this church were handed over to the Grammar School at Macclesfield. This church has suffered much from the fall of its towers. In 1468 the original central tower fell, destroying the choir and other parts of the building. Having been re-erected, it again fell in 1572, and two years later the north-western tower came down, causing the destruction of the west end of the church. This tower, having again been set up, as shown in the initial to this chapter, again fell in 1881, bringing down with it the north porch, of early English style, which was itself in a somewhat shaky condition. The present porch is a copy, so far as this age can copy its predecessors' works, of the old building. This fall took place on the night of the 14th and 15th of April, and was graphically described in the columns of the *Cheshire Sheaf* by the late Mr. Thomas Hughes, who was, one might almost say, an eye-witness of the event. 'I was sitting alone in my room,' he says, 'and actually reading Ormerod's description of St. John's at the very instant, ten o'clock, when the crash of masonry, mingled with the sound of tinkling bells, fell upon my ear! The conviction at once seized me that the great tower had succumbed; for the imminence of its fall had been for some days past manifest to all who, like myself, had watched the widening cracks in the eastern and northern faces of the structure. I was on the spot in a few moments, and realised at once all my worst fears; for there, palpable in the moonlight to every eye, ran a fearful chasm up the northern wall of the steeple; the belfry being exposed, but the bells still all, as it now turns

Other Religious Houses and Churches

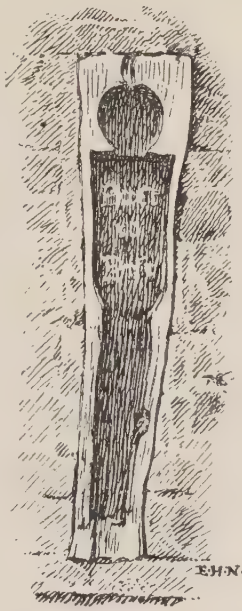
out, standing, though awaiting, as it then seemed to every one, an all but certain destiny e'er a few hours should pass by! It was a sight to daze the head, and wellnigh disorder the brain, of one who reverences and revels in the treasures of the past! Exactly three centuries ago this very year, namely in 1581, the parishioners, having their old church, with the western end in ruins—through the fall seven years previously of the eastern and southern sides of the tower—handed over to them by Queen Elizabeth, began at great cost and labour to close up again the stunted nave. Apparently also, at least two other extremities of the cruciform church were reduced and closed in at the same date, and divine service was thenceforward celebrated on the reformed basis, in the still handsome parish church. The steeple, too, was rebuilt as far as needful at the same period: and the work our zealous forefathers then bequeathed us has borne the wear and tear of three hundred years gallantly, till hard fate has re-enacted, now, the fearful havoc the previous fall did for the sacred fabric in 1574! . . . The fragment remaining of the steeple—for a second fall occurred at four next morning—is probably doomed to immediate destruction.' A picture of the church as it was before the fall of the tower may be seen in the art gallery at the Grosvenor Museum. Like the cathedral, St. John's has suffered from the inevitable restorers, and externally looks like a rather dull modern church, when it is seen apart from the interesting ruins at the east end. Internally, however, it has some features of great architectural interest. The nave and aisles are separated by Norman arches and piers, of different, but of early dates. Mr. Parker in his paper on this church in the *Journal* of the Chester Architectural

and Archæological Society, pointed out that the pillars in the middle of the series are, as is not uncommonly the case, a little later than those at either end. This, he says, is accounted for by the usual practice of the middle ages: the choir, which was necessary for the daily service, was the first thing to be built: after that was completed, the nave was begun; and the west end with the western doorways were the earliest parts of the nave to be finished. The eastern bay, being necessary to support the central tower, was also built at the same period. There was frequently a considerable interval of time before the rest of the nave was completed, as this depended upon how the funds came in. On the last pillar of the north arcade are the remains of a fresco representing St. John the Baptist with the Agnus Dei. Above the arcades are the triforium and clerestory, which belong to the time of the transition between Norman and early English, the finest things in the church. They were built about the end of the twelfth century, according to Mr. Parker, and at the same time as the erection of the side aisles. The organ occupies the north transept, and the south is fitted up as a chapel in memory of Bishop Peter, the founder of the church. It is furnished with rather fine gates, outside which is the old reredos of Moses and Aaron, with the ten commandments, painted in 1692, when it cost £25.

By the side of this hangs the mace-board, a list of parishioners who have held the position of mayor down to 1794, of special interest because the dexter side of it is in the writing of Randle Holme the herald. Another list extending to 1848 is in the porch. In the north-west corner of the nave are several tombstones amongst which is one bearing the

symbols of a glover, the shears, wand and glove; another of some alderman of the Smiths' Company, with horseshoe, hammer and pincers; and another of a priest, bearing a chalice and a book. All these emblems are in each case subsidiary to a large floriated cross which forms the main object represented on the stone. Near these is a case containing tiles, fragments of Roman pottery, the leaden chalice and paten from the coffin of a priest, and some other objects found in and about the church. The west window, given at the Jubilee of the late Queen, by the Duke of Westminster, contains representations of various historic events connected with the church, a list of which will be found in the illustrated guide to be seen in the church itself. In the same guide is a reproduction of an ancient plan of the church, the original of which is amongst the Harleian MSS., representing the condition of affairs before 1470. From this we see that the choir was of four bays and had an apsidal termination and side aisles. One of these bays is included in the present church of which it forms the chancel. The remainder are in a ruined state and can be seen outside the church from the path leading down to the river side. Lodged in the wall of a part of these ruins is an oak coffin, monoxylic, inscribed internally with the words 'Dust to Dust.' Several more or less ridiculous and fabulous stories have been told about this coffin and its strange position. As a matter of fact it was found in digging a grave in this part of the ruins, somewhere in the nineteenth century. The verger stuck the coffin into a recess in the wall, then quite near to the level of the ground, and painted in its interior the inscription which it now bears. Subsequent excavations having lowered

the ground, have left the coffin relatively much higher up in the wall than it was when first placed there so as to be out of harm's way. The plan above alluded to shows that there were two cells for anchorites near to St. John's Church, and the block of stone, on which one of them was perched, still remains.[1] It was to one of these cells that, according to a baseless tradition, Harold retired after the battle of Senlac. A friar was inducted into a cell at St. John's in 1363. 'John Spicer, hermit, obtains a warrant, Sep. 9, 1358, of Edward, Prince of Wales, pardoning him for acquiring to himself and his successors, hermits, of Stephen de Merton, a parcel of land between the Dee and the quarry, and building thereon a hermitage enclosed within a wall.' This was probably connected with the Capella S. Jacobi, which was on the south of the church, in the cemetery, and, in 1341, was held by Dean John de Marisco, mentioned 21 Edward IV. Another hermitage of St. James's stood beyond the Dee Bridge, to



WOODEN COFFIN, ST. JOHN'S

[1] It need hardly be mentioned that the building on the top of the rock is not the cell but a modern edifice; but the porch to it—part of an old church outside Chester—might mislead the unwary if this warning were not uttered.

which 'Ieuan ap Bleth' ap Carwet was appointed by the king as hermit, and whose conduct and regimen the king desires the mayor and sheriffs to inquire into.' (Morris.) The successor of this particular hermit seems to have been a very bad character, for in 1450 he was indicted as a common receiver of robbers and indeed was accused of putting his house to far worse uses than that. Anchorites differed from hermits in being shut up—a special ceremony took place at their enclosure—in small cells, connected with a parish church. They had a servant or servants to wait upon them, and the charitable, who provided them with food, passed it in to them through a hole in the wall of their cell. In the churchyard at a much later date stood a house known as the Priory, which has now been pulled down. It was situated against the south side of the church and is said in Hemingway's *History* to have been raised by Sir Robert Cotton from a small cottage which stood upon this spot before the beginning of the seventeenth century. This house was for a time occupied by Thomas de Quincey, who has left an account of it in his *Autobiographic Sketches* from which some quotations will now be given. He speaks of himself as having gone there after 'that episode, or impassioned parenthesis in my life, which is comprehended in *The Confessions of an Opium Eater*, had finished.' 'Suppose it over and gone, and once more, after the storms of London, suppose me resting from my dreadful remembrances in the deep monastic tranquillity of St. John's Priory; and just then, by accident, with no associates except my mother and my uncle. What was the Priory like?' He proceeds, 'This gem was an ancient house, on a miniature scale, called the Priory; and until the dissolution of religious houses

in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, had formed part of the priory attached to the ancient Church (still flourishing) of St. John's. Towards the end of the sixteenth, and through the first quarter of the seventeenth century, this Priory had been in the occupation of Sir Robert Cotton, the antiquary, the friend of Ben Jonson,[1] of Coke, of Selden, etc., and advantageously known as one of those who applied his legal and historical knowledge to the bending back into constitutional moulds of those despotic twists, which interests and false counsels had developed in the Stuart and Tudor dynasties. It was an exceedingly pretty place; and the kitchen, upon the ground storey, which had a noble groined ceiling of stone, indicated, by its disproportionate scale, the magnitude of the establishment to which it had once ministered. Attached to this splendid kitchen were tributary offices, etc. On the upper storey were exactly five rooms—viz., a servants' dormitory (meant in Sir Robert's day for two beds at the least), and a servants' sitting-room. These were shut off into a separate section, with a little staircase (like a ship's companion-ladder) and a little lobby of its own. But the principal section in this upper storey had been dedicated to the use of Sir Robert, and consisted of a pretty old hall lighted by an old monastic-painted window in the door entrance; secondly, a rather elegant dining-room; thirdly, a bed-room. The glory of the house internally lay in the monastic kitchen; and, secondly, in what a Frenchman would have called, properly, Sir Robert's own apartment of three rooms; but thirdly and chiefly, in a pile of ruined archways, most

Other Religious Houses and Churches

[1] And there, according to tradition, he had been visited by Ben Jonson. (*Confessions of an English Opium Eater.*)

picturesque, so far as they went, but so small that Drury-lane could easily have found room for them on its stage. These stood in the miniature pleasure-ground, and were constantly resorted to by artists for specimens of architectural decays, or of nature working for the concealment of such decays by her ordinary processes of gorgeous floral vegetation. Ten rooms there may have been in the "Priory," as offered to my mother for less than £500! A drawing-room, bed-rooms, dressing-rooms, etc., making about ten more, were added by my mother for a sum under £1000. The same miniature scale was observed in all these additions. And as the "Priory" was not within the walls of the city, (whilst the River Dee flowing immediately below, secured it from annoyance on one side—and the church, with its adjacent churchyard, insulated it from the tumults of life on all the other sides)—an atmosphere of conventual stillness and tranquillity brooded over it and all around it for ever. Such was the house and such was the society in which I now found myself.' The entrance to the Priory it appears at this time was through an archway brought from the nunnery of St. Mary, and was on the north side of the ruined portions of St. John's Church. The kitchen with groined roof was the chapter-house itself, the door of entrance to the hall was a Norman window, and the ruins alluded to are those now in existence, but then, as previously mentioned, much more obscured by accumulations of earth than they now are. It was in 1803 and just before De Quincey went to Worcester College, Oxford, that he was a resident in this house.

A map of Chester, which appears in a work called *Britannia Magna*, published in Amsterdam in 1661, gives eighteen churches in the city, some of which

have entirely disappeared. Of those which remain the next most interesting to St. John's is the church of St. Mary's on the Hill, 'usually called *super montem*,' says the *Vale Royal*, for 'it standeth upon the brow of a bank that riseth from the west side of the Bridge Street and not far from that gate.' It was also described as *De Castro*, but it was not in the liberties of the Castle, but in those of the city. This church was given to the abbot of St. Werburgh's by Ranulph the fourth Earl of Chester. Its parish extended beyond the boundaries of the city. The area was altered when the new church of St. Mary without the walls was built in Handbridge, and now includes the old parishes of St. Bridget and St. Martin, as well as part of the original parish of St. Mary. After the dissolution the church was seized from the dean and chapter by Sir R. Cotton, who sold it to the Brereton family. Thence the patronage passed through the Wilbrahams and Hills to the Westminster family. Externally a building of no very great attractiveness, it possesses in its interior some objects of interest. The roof is supposed to have come originally from Basingwerke Abbey, (Flint) for in the churchwardens' accounts under date 1536, it is noted that 'the quere was boght at basewerk and sette uppe with all costs and charges belongynge to the same.' This roof, quite recently repaired, is an excellent specimen of the Tudor date, and the fine carving of the bosses is well brought out by the paint. The nave and aisles are separated from one another by arcades also of the Tudor period. In the north aisle is a memorial to the four Randle Holmes, whose names are ever to be remembered in connection with Chester, and of whom some account is given in another chapter. On either side of the

Other Religious Houses and Churches

chancel is a chapel, that on the north being dedicated to St. Catherine. In it are two interesting altar tombs. The first of these is to the memory of Thomas Gamull, recorder of Chester, and father of the loyal Sir Francis Gamull, whose name has been mentioned in connection with the siege of Chester. The recumbent effigies of the recorder and his wife lie on the top of the tomb, and the figure at the feet of the lady is that of their son, afterwards Sir Francis. The other tomb bears a semi-recumbent effigy of Philip Oldfield of Bradwall. Ormerod accounts for the excellent state of preservation of these monuments, by stating that when Chester was surrendered to the Parliamentarians, the representatives of these families procured an assurance that their respective family tombs in St. Mary's Church should be preserved from injury, as the property they most valued. The result proved how necessary was their forethought, as these two tombs are the only monuments of a like character in Chester which escaped demolition by the Puritans. The southern chapel is called the Troutbeck Chapel. It was built in 1435 by William Troutbeck and Joan his wife, but the roof falling in in 1661, the monuments within were destroyed. Collections were made in the neighbourhood, and it was rebuilt. It was again restored in 1891. Near this chapel and at the east end of the south aisle proper are the remains of an interesting fresco of which a coloured restoration hangs below in a frame. Under the figure of a king is a representation of the Crucifixion with our Lady and St. John. Then on the angle of the wall is a bishop, and beyond this on the pilaster of the window the Instruments of the Passion with the figure of Our Lord showing the wound in His side. This church

must have been exceedingly rich in ecclesiastical furniture, and was promptly dismantled after the change of religion. In 1547 the Holy Rood was taken down and the walls were 'white-limed' so as to cover up the frescoes. In 1550, a sum was paid 'for taking down the alters and tyling the church flore.' In 1553 the commissioners visited Chester and as a result of their visit the copes, vestments etc. sold are found to have produced £10, 13s. 6d., a larger sum than that obtained in a similar manner from any other church, not excepting the cathedral. Under Queen Mary the Rood once more returned to its accustomed place, for there is an entry in the books 'gathered in the parish for the makyng of the Rode, 8s. 4d.' but it was not long to remain. In 1559, Elizabeth having now come to the throne, the rood was taken down, a communion table provided and a communion book, whilst in 1562 the rood-loft itself was removed as well as the altar, the church was white-washed throughout and the ten commandments written up. (Earwaker.) Being near to the castle, the churchyard was used for the burial of prisoners there executed, and at times there must have been considerable employment given, from this cause, to the grave-diggers. In 1631 the following entries of burials appear close together. 'Thomas Laceby, a prisoner, pressed to death, buried in the church-yard on the north side the steeple the 23rd day of Aprill. John Johnson, Joan Broome and Katherine Crosse, three persons that were executed, buried att the west end of the steeple in the church-yard the 25th day of Aprill.' Again during the Commonwealth, in 1656, 'Three witches hanged at Michaelmas Assizes, buried in the corner by the Castle Ditch in the church yard 8th of October.'

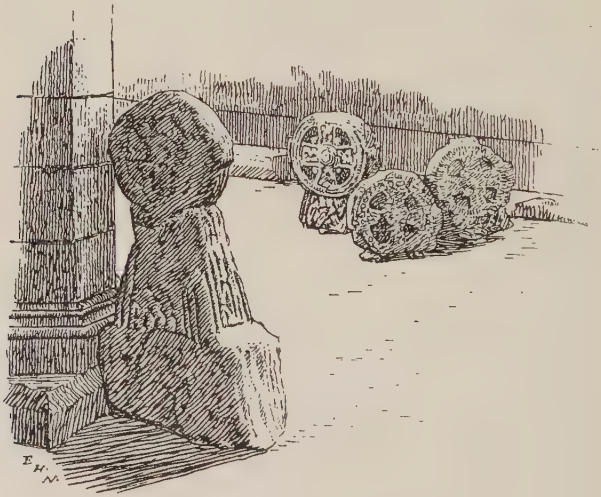
Other Religious Houses and Churches

A few notes on each must suffice for the remaining churches. Holy Trinity is a perfectly new church, occupying the site of one of considerable antiquity, for a church of this name stood here shortly after the Conquest. It is situated on the north side of Watergate Street, and the Roodeye forms part of its parish. It will be remembered that the Rector was not allowed to claim tithes for this, because it was rescued from the sea, but he was allowed to feed his horse there. The church contains an exceedingly mutilated effigy of John de Whitmore, dating from the latter part of the fourteenth century, and a good example of the military equipment of that period. St. Peter's Church stands right in the centre of the city, being at the intersection of the four chief streets. In front of it stood the old City Cross, and against its south wall was erected that interesting building the Pentice, which will be described in another chapter. *Templum sancti Petri* is mentioned in Domesday, so that the predecessor of this church can lay claim to great antiquity of origin. Some think that its position is that once occupied by the Roman Prætorium. It had at one time a spire, but this was taken down, as it had become dangerous. The church is interesting on account of its long history and from its connection, through the Pentice, with the civic life, but otherwise it has no claims upon attention. St. Martin's, which was certainly founded before 1250, was rebuilt in 1721, has been since restored, and is used as a Welsh church. Its parish was united with that of St. Bridget in 1842. St. Michael's Church is at the corner of Bridge Street and Pepper Street, and the tower, through which a footway passes, stands over Bridge Street Row. According to Mr. Earwaker, the first distinct reference to this church is to be found

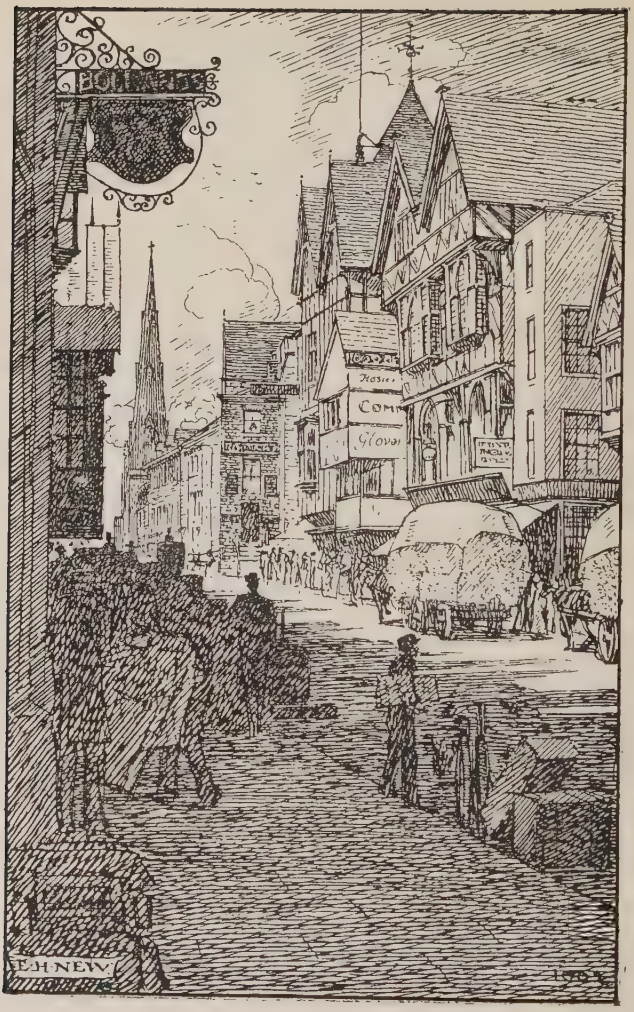
in the foundation charter of Stanlaw Abbey, which was established in the Wirral Hundred in 1173, but afterwards removed to Whalley, where its remains still exist. This Abbey was founded by John de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, and in his charter he grants certain premises in Chester, '*juxta ecclesiam Sancti Michaelis.*' A 'monastery of St. Michael' is mentioned in 1055. Little is known of this, and probably it was burnt down in 1118, when the church alone may have been kept up. On the visit of the commissioners of Edward VI. the articles belonging to the church which were disposed of brought only 15s. 9d. In 1582 the church was almost entirely rebuilt: an entry of this period, referring to the building of the steeple, alludes to the erection of 'a chamber to the church.' This is clearly shown in Randle Holme's sketch in the British Museum. The steeple was evidently of wood, and it and the 'chamber' built out at the west end, overhanging the row, and no doubt uniform with it, are clearly shown. This chamber or living room was built in the black and white timber-and-plaster style, and was approached from the outside by the flight of steps shown in the drawing. It is quite possible that the rector or curate who officiated in the church lived in this 'chamber,' for at this time he was only receiving the stipend of £8 per year, paid to him quarterly by the churchwardens. ST. OLAVE'S CHURCH, a small edifice built on a rock, is no longer used as a church. Its origin dates back to before the Conquest, after which event it was in the hands of the Botelers; and Richard Pincerna in 1101 gave it to the Abbey of St. Werburgh. Amongst churches which have been destroyed may be mentioned ST. CHAD'S, in the Crofts, of which even the site is unknown; ST. THOMAS A BECKET, which was in

Other Religious Houses and Churches

Liverpool Row; and St. Bridget. The last was in Bridge Street until 1828; and it is thought that the foundation of the original church of this name may have been as far back as the time of Offa. There have been several other chapels in the city which have disappeared, but of these it seems hardly necessary to make any special mention. The new churches are St. Thomas's, Christ Church, St. Mary's without the Walls, and St. Paul's.



SAXON CROSSES AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH



EASTGATE STREET

CHAPTER X

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS

THE PENTICE

AS in the case of other cities of ancient origin, the exact manner in which municipal institutions arose in Chester is not a little difficult to discover. Not that there is any lack of material for a history of the Corporation; Canon Morris's work affords a wealth of information, and contains reprints and translations of the different charters which the city has received. But here, as in some other places, it is not easy to show clearly what were the connections between it and the guild-merchant, and how that institution became altered into a Corporation comparable with the Corporation as we now know it.

The Gild-Merchant is expressly mentioned in Ranulph Blundeville's Charter of 1200-1202, and is spoken of as existing in the time of this Earl's predecessors, 'Ranulphus, etc. . . . Notum sit vobis

omnibus me dedisse et concessisse et presenti carta mea confirmasse omnibus civibus meis de Cestria Gildam suam mercalem cum omnibus libertatibus et liberis consuetudinibus quas illi unquam melius et liberius et quietius habuerunt temporibus antecessorum meorum in predicta Gilda.' Such a Gild, with full privileges, would have the exclusive right of trading within the city, the right also to hold markets and fairs, and to be exempt from the interference of the bailiffs of the Earl in their civic affairs. Moreover, by the payment of a certain fixed sum per annum as fee-farm, the members would escape from the arbitrary and fluctuating payments of tax and toll. It is suggested that a mayor was first appointed in Chester in 1257 ; if so, or at whatever date he did appear, it seems as if he may have been only the president of the Gild-Merchant under another name. Canon Morris thinks that this change in title most likely occurred when Henry III. took over the Earldom of Chester in 1237. At any rate, the city had no other charters of incorporation in early times save those granted by the Norman earls, and afterwards confirmed from time to time by succeeding kings; and, though entrance into the Gild in the time of Richard II. was synonymous with taking up the franchise of the city, there is no formal authorisation of a mayor and corporation until the great charter of 21 Henry VII. The first mention of a mayor which Canon Morris has been able to discover amongst the documents in the Chester muniment-room occurs in a charter of Edward I. (1300), and the mayor is frequently mentioned in other documents prior to the issue of the charter of Henry VII. Associated with the mayor we find a body of twenty-four aldermen, a suggestive number, since it is that met with in other

towns, as a kind of double jury, forming the inner circle of municipal life. Freeman thus speaks of this body as it existed at Exeter: 'Among the privileged order of freemen, a further privileged body arose, the body of twenty-four, the Chamber or Common Council. It doubtless arose, like all such bodies, gradually, and, to some extent, out of the necessity of the case. For many purposes in the civic administration there was clearly need of some smaller and less fluctuating body than the whole mass of citizens. No democracy is without a senate of some kind; where oligarchy steps in is in making that senate hereditary or self-elected. At Exeter we first dimly hear of a body of thirty-six, marked out in some way, not necessarily permanently, from the mass of the assembly. The attendance of the freemen was doubtless fluctuating. In all such bodies we find complaints of crowds and the disorders consequent on crowds, balanced by rules enforcing attendance by penalties, and fixing some definite number as necessary for the transaction of business. When such a number is fixed, it is an easy step to summon that particular number in some understood way, and another easy step to confine the powers of the whole assembly to the summoned body.' The number was not, of course, the same in every city, for it was at first fourteen in Bristol, though this was raised to forty-eight in 1373. The oath taken by each member of the twenty-four of Chester is preserved by Ormerod, and is as follows: 'I shalbe readye as one of the 24 of this Cittye, and come upon due warninge to me made, to the mayor for the tyme beinge, And geue him my true advise and Counsell of anyething I Am required of Touchinge the ffraunches weale governement and good rule of this Cittye, as often tymes as

Municipal Institutions

the Case requireth. And be Assistante and Attendance giue to the Mayors and Sheriffes for the tyme beinge, for the p'servation of the peace, as farr as the ffraunches of the Cittye of Chester stretcheth, And to keep their Counsell, and ordinaunces made by the more pte of them, shall truely keepe and performe, As helpe me God,' etc. By the great charter of Henry VII. the citizens were ordered to assemble in the Common Hall on the Friday next after the Feast of St. Denis, and choose two from amongst the twenty-four aldermen, one of whom should subsequently be elected mayor by the aldermen and sheriffs. The mayor has certain peculiar privileges. Since at least the time of Queen Elizabeth he has always been styled Right Worshipful instead of merely Worshipful, and is so styled to the present day. Again, he has the right to have the sword of state carried before him with point erect, as well as the more usual mace. There was a pillory near the High Cross, known as the mayor of Chester's Pillory; but at an early date the mayor was claiming the right of pillory far beyond the 'ffraunches' of his own city. In the reign of Edward II. we find the Abbot of Vale Royal Monastery petitioning the Crown for the removal of a pillory which the mayor of Chester had set up in front of their house, which they denounce as a common nuisance. There were two sheriffs, the King's and the Earl's, who, under the name of prefects, are specifically referred to in Domesday Book. In mediæval times the King's Sheriff was elected by the Court of Aldermen, as representing the Crown, while the Earl's Sheriff was elected in open assembly by the popular voice. On this account the latter came to be called the 'Popular Sheriff.' To the very end this title was retained, for at one of the last, if not

the last, contest for the post prior to the Municipal Reform Act, a weaver was elected, and the fact is recorded in the books of that company that 'Mr. Joseph Ridgway (a member of this company) was elected popular sheriff of this city.' The Municipal Reform Act, with rude disregard of old custom, swept away most of the ancient usages of the city, and assimilated its corporation and methods of election to those of younger places. It is obviously impossible, in the limited space here at one's disposal, to give any detailed account of the doings of the municipality of Chester, but before passing on to the subject of the trade guilds, so closely allied with the government of the city and its commerce, a few matters may be dealt with throwing light upon the life of the city, and the influence upon it of the municipal authorities. Regrating, that is, buying up corn or any victuals in a market for the sake of selling them in the same market at a profit, and forestalling, that is, the purchase of victuals on their way to any market, and before they had been exposed in the same, were both offences of which frequent mention is made, and all traders were required to bring their goods into a public place for sale, so that no one person might have an advantage over another. In 1421, butchers, fishmongers, and cooks were forbidden to buy fresh fish, capons, or hens before six o'clock in the morning, or to go outside the city to forestall the same before being brought into the city. In 1533 it was ordered that all corn and grain for sale should be brought into the market-place, and that none should be shown or opened until the market bell had rung. Then the citizens were allowed to buy for their own domestic purposes. At one o'clock the bakers might begin to make their purchases, and from two to three

was the time for the common people. Three years later it was further added that, 'No person, not inhabiting within the city, should come to buy before two o'clock.' But beyond this the mayor had a special privilege on behalf of the city. If any ship came into the port, unconsigned to any special citizen, the mayor might, during a certain specified number of hours, exercise the right of buying the cargo, and re-selling it for a profit, which profit belonged to the city. During the mayoralty of William Gamull, in 1608, one Robert Berie, was found guilty of having 'boughte within the same Citie to and for his owne private Commoditie of one Andrew Taylor, a merchant straunger, Seaventye and Sixe tonnes of gascoigne wyne, w'ch latelie arryved at the said citie from the p'tes behoinde the Seas upon thadventure of the said m'ch'te straunger, before such tyme as the same wynes were offered to be sould to the Maior of the said Citie as a Common bargaine for the gen'all good and benefite of the Citie.' As Berie was a member of the Common Council, he ought to have known, and doubtless did know, better, so he was fined forty pounds. Whereupon, 'he, the said Robert Berie, shewinge great passion of anger and malice, uttered forth against the Maior of the said Citie and Mr. Edmund Gamull, Ald'n, verie undutifull, undecent speeches to have been uttered againste a Magistrate, as namely, in sayinge that "what was done against him proceeded of their inveterate malice towards him," and other like evill woords. Therefore it is ordered that the said Rob'te Berrye, for such his uncivill and unduityfull demeanor is, by a gen'all Consente of the whole assembly, Committed to the prison of the Northgate in the same Citie.' The whole account affords a good example of the way in which the

citizens preserved their ancient rights, and took thought for the dignity of their chief magistrates.

The Mayor kept watch over the sale of different kinds of food to the citizens. Bakers were obliged to sell their bread at prices fixed at an assize, in accordance with the price of corn in the market. Each baker had a registered mark for his loaves, and those who were found to be selling under-weight were fined, or perhaps even subjected to more painful punishments. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, complaints having been made as to the weight and quality of the loaves, 'foreign' bakers were allowed to come into the city and sell their bread on Wednesdays and Saturdays, weekly, under the new Shambles, from three to eight o'clock, p.m. The butchers also were closely watched, members of that body being often presented for selling bad meat, breaking the mayor's assize, and refusing to charge moderate prices. Canon Morris prints in his work, which is a storehouse of information on these subjects, a carefully thought-out order 'how Bochers shall sell fleshe.' Many regulations were also made as to the sale of beer, for the ale-houses were a constant source of trouble to the municipality. They were generally kept by women; and in the time of Henry VIII. a mayor named Henry Gee, who was the originator of a number of regulations bearing on all kinds of subjects, made a decree that, in order to 'eschew provocation of wantonny and braules, frays and other inconvenyents as doth and may ensu amongst youth and light disposed persons,' no taverns or ale-houses should be kept within the city by any woman between fourteen and forty years of age. There were many places of this description in the city, and over and above the houses specially set apart for drinking,

there were the 'ale-bowers' or chambers in private houses, where home-brewed liquors could be bought and consumed. These must have been a source of great trouble to the authorities. Some of the restrictions appear to our eyes to have been tyrannous in the extreme. In the first year of Queen Elizabeth it is complained that joiners and carvers were in the habit of sending their finished work to Ireland and other places 'at unreasonable great and dear price, so that while the owners became greatly enriched, the citizens were therein unserved.' Consequently, an order is made that no joined wood, wainscot, or the like is to be sent away by any workman living within the liberties of the city without special license. On the other hand, in 1569, one Taddy Brady, whose nationality it is not difficult to guess, is brought before the mayor for 'importing from Ireland eight hawkes, viz., two goshawkes and six tassels.' Gee, the intrepid, even went so far as to make regulations concerning the hats and caps of the women, and about the attendance of the weaker sex at Churchings. In towns which contained many houses largely built of wood, provisions against fire were very necessary, and in 1569 each alderman and councillor was made responsible for the maintenance of a certain number of water buckets; whilst still later each alderman was required to provide, at the cost of his ward, a hook, with rings, and a ladder, for use in case of fire. The object of the hook was to pull down houses which it was impossible to save, and which might be a source of danger to their neighbours. Dogs were not allowed to roam at will through the city, an excellent provision; and in 1588 seven citizens were indicted for letting their dogs be in the streets 'unmoselled.' We are inclined to believe that compulsory education is a

product of our own day, but Gee was before us in Chester, in the sixteenth century, for he makes a series of orders on the subject, which commence, '*Youth of thage of vj yeres or aboue to be sett to Schole & other vertuous exercise, &c.* For asmoche as the wretched Lif of ociositie or Idlenes is the rote of all vic's, and engendreth slouth, poutie, mys'ie, and other inconuenienc's, as voluptuositie and all other vayne things, sleynge the body, wasting good dedes, and letting v'tue and goodness to prosede, (whervnto youth & tender age by cou'se of nature dothe enclyne & obey, Onles some grace otherwyse be sent from Aboue,) or els the vse & exercise of busynes in learning of good & v'tuus leving: *Children to be sett to Schole all week, & to Come to Church to here diuine seruice on holy days & Sundays: and afternoone to Shute on Roodey, or elsewhere, for pinns or poynts.*' People's minds were being exercised evidently at the decay of archery, to judge by the last line of the above, for after the regulations which follow the above heading, concerning attendance at school, there is a further series as to the use of the bow and arrow, preluded by the following statement: '*All parents of children to buye them Bowes and Arrows to sute with on Roodee, accordinge to ye Statute of Artillery, beinge the Auntient use & means of defence of this Kingdom.*' Even the teaching of unrecognised teachers was forbidden, a state of affairs to which we are now approximating by slow degrees. In 1682 one Jonathan Rutter is brought before the Consistory Court, 'for contempt of the Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in teaching boys without having obtained any faculty or license,' and having confessed the charge, was monished to obtain a license by a certain day. This having arrived, he was again called upon, but failing

to reply, was sentenced '*pro confesso haberi*,' and to be excommunicated. It is fair to point out that this crime was one against the ecclesiastical, and not the municipal, court. The health of the town was not looked after as it is nowadays with us; but some efforts were made, especially under the incentive of the Plague, to improve sanitary matters. The scourge just mentioned visited Chester on various occasions; but the most notable epidemic was in 1647, after the Siege, when two thousand people, as Randle Holme's notes show, perished, and grass is said to have grown in the principal streets of the city. In one week—July 7 to July 15—141 persons succumbed to the disease. A contemporary record says: 'The plague takes them very strangely, strikes them black of one side, and then they run mad; some drowne themselves; others would kill themselves; they dye within few hours; some run up and down the streets in their shirts, to the great horrour of those in the city.' Five of the twenty-four members of the Company of Barber Chirurgeons died in this year, and the books of the Company, after noting the elections to office for the year, add: 'July 2, 1647, being then the tyme of the Lords Dreadfull visitac'on of this Cittie of Chester; fro' w'ch, praysed be the God of heaven, who hath in mercy stayed his Judgment, and p'mitted a remnant to survive to give him praise this day.' The filth of the houses, even the good ones, must have been almost incredible, if we are to believe the account which Erasmus gives of the interior of the English dwelling-houses of his day. He says: 'The floors are in general laid with a white clay, and are covered with rushes, occasionally removed, but so imperfectly that the bottom layer is left undisturbed, sometimes for twenty years, harbouring expectorations, vomit-

ings, the leakage of dogs and men, ale-droppings, scraps of fish, and other abominations not fit to be mentioned. The island would be much more salubrious if the use of rushes was abandoned. More moderation in diet, and especially in the use of salt meats, might be of service, more particularly were public ediles appointed to see the streets cleaned from mud, and the suburbs kept in better order.' If such was the condition of the houses, the streets of all cities no doubt were in an even more filthy state, and those of Chester were no exception, judging from the efforts made by the mayor of 1636 to get them kept in something like order. Amongst the records it is stated that an order is made 'that the lord bishop be informed of the unwholesomeness of the puddle near the East Gate, and the inhabitants be ordered to cleanse the street before their respective doors within one month, under a fine of ten shillings.' Another note tells us that 'The maior caused the dirt of many foule lanes in Chester to be carried to make a banke to enlarge the roodey, and let shipps in. It cost about 100*l.*' The general fate of reformers is exemplified by the notice of another mayor possessed of a zeal for sanitation. 'This man (William Edwards, mayor), a stout man, and had not the love of the commons. He was cruel and not pitying the poor, he caused many dunghills to be carried away, but the cost and time was on the poor, it being so bad times might well have been spared.'

Some feeble attempt was made at lighting the dirty streets at night. In 1503, during the mayoralty of Richard Goodman, an order was made on this subject. 'It is ordered By mayester mayre and his brethren that eu'y man that hath byne mayre or sheriff of the Citie of Chester, And allso all Inkepers, as well they

that have sygnez as they that have no sygnez, shall have hanging at their dores A Lantorne wyth a candyll bryning in it every nyghte, from that it be first nyght unto the oure of viij of the clocke, That is to wyt, from the feste of all Sayntes unto the feste of the puryfycacon of oure Ladye then Next foloyng yerly, upon the Payne of everye man doing the contrarye, xij d.' It must be admitted that the period of the year, from the first of November to the second of February was short enough and the same might be said for the length of time that the light had to be maintained each evening, for it was actually allowed to be extinguished a whole hour before the closing time of taverns and ale-bowers. The centre of the municipality was, for many years, at the Pentice. This building, which was a pent-house or lean-to edifice erected against the side of St. Peter's Church and near the City Cross, is well shown in the reproduction of Randle Holme's drawing given in Canon Morris's book.[1] 'The mayor,' says the *Vale Royal*, 'remaineth most part of the day at a place called the Pendice, which is a brave place builded as for the purpose at the high Cross and under St. Peter's Church, and in the midest of the city, in such a sort, that a man may stand therein, and see into the markets, and four principal streets of the city.' The Pentice is first heard of in 1311, and thenceforward its name frequently appears in the history of Chester. In 1488 the corporation seem to have temporarily abandoned it as a place of meeting and to have hired St. Nicholas's Chapel for that purpose, but a few years later the Pentice was rebuilt, as it appears in Randle Holme's picture, and again became the centre of city life. It was not actually pulled down until 1803, a

[1] See fig. p. 203.

period when there was no kind of restraint—there is little enough now — upon those barbarians whose main purpose in life seems to be the overthrow of objects of antiquarian interest. The present Town Hall was built in the latter half of the last century and contains portraits of Chester worthies and benefactors. It was from the Pentice that the celebrated wooden hand was hung in times of fairs, to proclaim the king's peace, Canon Morris thinks, though an old inhabitant of the city writing in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, says that it was to show traders from a distance, though not sworn Freemen, that they might carry on their business without fear of being pounced upon by the city authorities. After the Pentice was pulled down, the hand was still hung out from St. Peter's Church for thirty-three years. Then a mayor arose who would not pay to Peter Catherall, its keeper, the trifling fee of 3s. 9d. to which he was, by long custom, entitled for putting it up and taking it down. Catherall got rid of the hand to a person named Wilkinson, and he 'sold it for two pints of Ale at the sign of the Boot, in the city of Chester, on 27th Nov. 1836,' says Mr. Gatty in the columns of the *Sheaf*. 'The Glove,' as it was commonly called, was then in the Mayer Museum, Liverpool.

There were at different times twenty-five trading companies in Chester, of some of which mention has already been made. It would be impossible to give details of all of them, but a few points may be mentioned concerning some of the more interesting. The Weavers Company was one of the oldest and the most turbulent also. 'Whenever a riot took place,' says Canon Morris, 'a large proportion, we may be sure, of the rioters was supplied by the many branches of trade included in that craft or closely

allied to it,' and he gives a full account of one special riot—*horribilis affraia*, in the Latin of the day—which took place on Corpus Christi Day, 1358. The Joyners, Carvers and Turners, already mentioned, formed a joint company and deserve to be held in remembrance as the originators of those fine half-timbered houses in which Chester was once so rich and of which a few still remain. There was a company of Fishmongers who held their meetings at one time in a house near the Cross. The Barbers Chirurgeons were, one would think most incongruously, united into a common company with the Wax and Tallow Chaundlers. Under the auspices of this company the medical men of Chester for years practised, though it was not impossible apparently, even in times of such strict trade-unionism, to obtain leave to minister to the sick without being a member of the company. In 1602, during the mayoralty of Hugh Glaseour, 'Nathaniel Woodward, a Chirurgion, exhibited his peticion to be admitted into the liberties and ffranchess of this citie; whose suite is graunted, in respecte he is thoughte to be a needeful member, havinge done many good Cures within this Citie, payinge for such his admittance ffyve poundes.' The Company of Painters, Glasiers, Imbroderers, and Stacioners who met in the Phœnix Tower, like other companies, was very vigorous in maintaining what it believed to be its rights. How far such companies were prepared to push their privileges is shown by a resolution arrived at as late as 1713, when complaint was made by one of the Stationers' members that two 'Ironmongers,' into whose hands a number of books had come, by the death of their owner, were proposing to 'sell or dispose of the aforesaid parcell of Books, by Auction

or otherwise, within the liberties of the Citty; and neither of them having served any Apprenticeship to the trade of a Stacioner, or being free of ye said Company.' It was actually decided to take action at law to prevent these men selling a lot of second-hand books, many, perhaps all, of which had in the first instance been sold by members of the Stationers' Company to their deceased owner. Another extraordinary mixture of trades in one company was that of Linen-Drapers and Bricklayers, at whose expense was maintained the Midsummer Show of Balaam and Balaam's Ass. The Cappers, Pinners, Wire Drawers and Linen-Drapers formed a company in 1705, the company previously mentioned having existed a century earlier. The Drawers in Dee was another old company which had rights over the river from the Old Bridge at Chester to the rocks at Brewers Hall and Blacon, with the fishery of what was in the sixteenth century called the Lake of Blacon. At one period of its history the Brewers were joined to it as also the company of Water Leaders or carriers. The rigorous protectionist policy of these companies must often, one would imagine, have been most inconvenient to the citizens, and indeed the regulations which they made at times infringed not only the civic ordinances but the statute law of the land, so that steps had to be taken to curb and limit their operations. In 1528 we find the corporation up in arms against the action of the companies, and issuing an order designed to check them. The grammar of the order is sadly to seek, but its meaning is plain enough, 'the ixth day of Aprill, in the xxti yere of the Reign of Kinge Henrye the eght, It was enacted and ordret by hugh Aldersey, mayre of the Cytye of Chester, & by the xxiiij'ti Aldermen, And by the hole consayle of the

The City of Chester

Saide Cytie, that no man' of occupac'ons w'tin the Citie of Chester shall not make no ordin'nes Amongst them selues cons'nynge ther occupac'ons, Contrarye to the Common welth of the Saide citie. And if They or ony of them Any Such ordynannces make, that it be not mayde Amongest their Selues w'tout the counsayle of the mayre of the Citie for ye tyme beinge, & of his brethrern. And those ordn'nc's to be vnder the Seall of Office, vpon the payne of forfeiture of xl's. as oft as it so can Be prouid, That is to wyt, the one haulfe therof Vnto the Sheriffs of the Seyde Citie, and the other half unto the comman boxe.' As at Coventry so at Chester, the pageants, shows and mystery plays were carried out at the expense of the trading companies, who took great pride in their exhibitions, and spent much money over them. There were two special times for shows, namely Midsummer Day and Whitsunday. The former show, less interesting by far than the other, was merely a pageant or procession something like the Lord Mayor's Show of our own day. It seems to have been instituted in 1498, and there is an agreement in existence between the mayor and two artists 'for the annual painting of the city's four giants, one unicorn, one dromedarye, one luce, one camel, one asse, one dragon, six hobby-horses, and six naked boys.' The mayor of 1599, 'a godly and zealous man,' seems to have taken offence at some parts of this show, for he caused 'the gyauntes to be broken and not to goe; the devil in his feathers'—this must have been a choice piece—'to be put awaye, and the cuppes and cannes and the dragon and the naked boys.' However he appears to have permitted some sort of a show to have taken place, for he caused a man in complete armour to go in their stead. During the unhappy

time when Puritanism thought it advisable to sit upon the safety-valve of innocent amusement, these shows were suspended to come forth with renewed vigour at the Restoration. They were finally abolished in 1677. '1677. June 7. The ancient midsummer shews ordered to be abolished from that time forwards,' runs the quotation given by Ormerod.

Municipal Institutions

The mystery plays of Chester, like those of Coventry, of such surpassing interest in the history of the stage, were performed on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after Whitsunday, and were said to have been composed by the celebrated Ranulph Higden, a monk of Chester and author of the *Polychronicon*, who is moreover supposed, traditionally, to have made three journeys to the Pope in order to obtain permission for their performance. A good idea of the method of performance of these dramas may be gathered from the following account of an eye-witness, Archdeacon Robert Rogers, an early Cestrian antiquary. He says: 'The maner of these playes weare —every company had his pagiant, or parte, which pagiants weare a high scafolde with 2 rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon 4 wheeles. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, being all open on the tope, that all behoulders mighte heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They begane first at the abbay gates (before the abbot and his brethren), and when the first pagiante was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete; and soe every street had a pagiant playinge before them at one tyme, till all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played; and when one pagiant was neere ended, worde was brought from streete to streete, that soe

the mighte come in place thereof, excedinge orderlye. and all the streetes have theire pagiantes afore them all at one tyme playeinge togeather; to se which playes was great resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they determined to play their pagiantes.' As before mentioned the different shows were provided by the various companies of Chester, and the following table, from Fenwick's *History*, exhibits their distribution, in time, and amongst the different guilds as well as the subjects, which, it will be noted, were all scriptural.

WHIT-MONDAY

I. Barkers and Tanners.	The Fall of Lucifer.
II. Drapers and Hosiers.	Creation of the World.
III. Drawers of Dee and Water Leaders.	Noe and his Shippe.
IV. Barbers, Wax-Chaundlers and Leeches.	Abraham and Isaac.
V. Cappers, Wire-Drawers, and Pinners.	King Balak and Balam with Moses.
VI. Wrights, Slaters, Tylers, Daubers and Thatchers.	The Nativity of our Lord.
VII. Paynters, Bootherers and Glaziers.	The Shepherds' Offering.
VIII. Vintners and Merchants.	King Herod and the Mounte Victorial.
IX. Mercers and Spisers.	The Three Kings of Coline.

WHIT-TUESDAY

I. Gouldsmiths and Masons.	The Slaying of the Children by Herod.
II. Smiths, Forbers and Pewterers.	Purification of our Lady.
III. Bouchers.	The Pinackle, with the Woman of Canaan.
IV. Glovers and Parchment-makers.	The Arising of Lazarus from Death to Life.

v.	Corvesers and Shoemakers.	The Coming of Christ to Jerusalem.
vi.	Boyers, Flechers, Stringers, Coopers and Torners.	The Scourging of Christ.
vii.	Bakers and Millners.	Christe's Maundye with His Disciples.
viii.	Ironmongers and Ropers.	The Crucifieinge of Christ.
ix.	Cookes, Tapsters, Hostlers and Innkeepers.	The Harrowinge of Hell.

WHIT-WEDNESDAY

i.	Skynners, Cardmakers, Hatters, Poynters and Girdlers.	The Resurrection.
ii.	Sadlers and Fusters.	The Castell of Emmaus and the Apostles.
iii.	The Taylors.	Ascension of Christ.
iv.	Fishmongers.	Whit-Sonday—the making of the Creed.
v.	Shermin.	Profetts afore the Day of Dome.
vi.	Hewsters and Bell-founders.	Antichriste.
vii.	Weavers and Walkers.	Domesday.

One thing which strikes the reader of such a list is that the people who conceived, carried out, and watched such a series of performances must have had a much greater knowledge of scripture history than some have been willing to concede, otherwise they would, at least the last class of them, have been wholly unable to understand what was being shown to them. The fact is that in the ages before printing, shows of this kind, with the pictured incidents of sacred history on the walls and in the windows of the churches, together with the instruction there afforded, gave people a much greater knowledge of

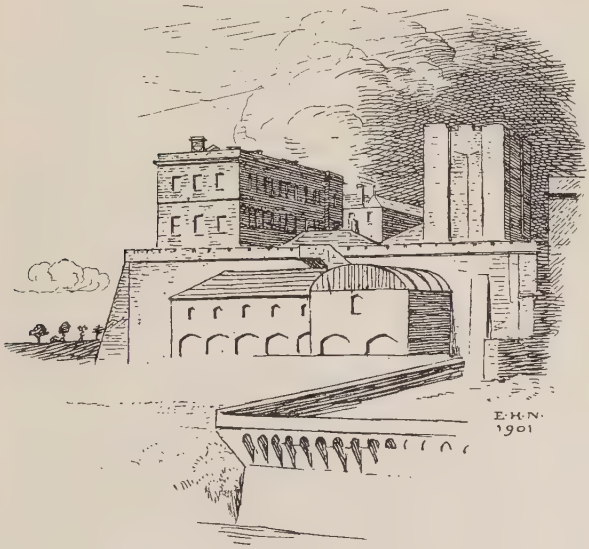
scriptural occurrences, as we are now beginning to understand, than was at one time regarded as possible. It would be tedious to rehearse here the lists of properties, etc., provided for these plays. The minute-books of the different companies contain many orders on this point, and they have been frequently quoted in articles and books on the rise of the drama. Banes or orders to appear were recited before the pagiantes took place, of which the following may serve as examples :—

'Cappers and lynnen drapers, see that you fourth bringe
In well decked order, that worthie storie
Of Balaam and his asse, and of Balacke the Kinge ;
Make the asse to spake, and sett yt out livelye.'

'The appearinge angell and starr upon Christes beirth
To shepheardes poore, of base and lowe degree,
You Painters and Glasiers decke out with all meirth,
And see that *Gloria in excelsis* be songe merelye.
Fewe wordes in that pageante makes meirth truly,
For all that the alter had to stande uppon,
Was glory to God above, and peace on earth to man.'

Although Whitsuntide was the great season for the performance of these plays, they were not wholly confined to that time. At Christmas, especially, and at other great feasts of the church, the pagiants would be wheeled out and the mystery appropriate to the season exhibited. After nearly three centuries of existence these performances came to an end as one of the results of the Reformation. They appear to have smacked too much of Catholicity to be wholly satisfactory after its overthrow, or perhaps it was thought better for the sake of peace not to remind people too vividly of the old and proscribed religion. Whatever may have been the reason they came to an

end in 1574, save for a performance, out of due time, mentioned in the next year by Ormerod. '1575.—This year Sir John Savage caused the Popish plays of Chester to be played the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after Midsummer Day, in contempt of an inhibition from York and from the Earl of Huntingdon. For which cause he was served by a pursuivant from York the same day that the new Mayor was elected as they came out of the common-hall.'



CHESTER CASTLE

GOD'S·PROVIDENCE·HOUSE:

CHAPTER XI

AMUSEMENTS AND CUSTOMS—THE ROWS—ANCIENT HOUSES—THE PORT OF CHESTER

WATERGATE STREET ROWS

CHESTER, like all other cities of ancient history, has its record of ancient sports, amusements, and customs, most of them now defunct, a few continued under altered circumstances. Some of these, like the Whitsuntide and Midsummer shows, dealt with in the last chapter, belonged to special times of the year, others had no regular season. The great ceremony of Christmas time was that of the setting of the watch on the eve of Christmas. There is a letter extant, printed in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, which gives a good account of how this ceremony was carried out in the reign of Charles II. The justices of the peace, the aldermen and the members of the

Common Council met at the mayor's house at six o'clock in the evening, and then the mayor, recorder, and justices of the peace in their scarlet gowns, proceeded, attended with lights and torches and accompanied by the local gentry to the City Hall. 'And beeing sate there (where usually is a great concourse of people) Silence beeing com'anded, the Customary Tenants of the Citty are then called to doe theire services: who, by persons for them, appeare in armes to watch and guard the Cittie for that night.' After this call-over the recorder made a speech, extolling the antiquity of the city. After this the keys of the city gates were handed to the mayor and given by him to those of the watchmen whom he might choose for the task of keeping guard for the night. The whole party then adjourned to the mayor's house. 'And after a collation there had, depart with their light torches to theire severall habitac'ons, and the watchmen to their guards.' The same ceremonies, with the exception of the recorder's speech, which only took place on Christmas Eve, occurred on the next two nights. No doubt there was a good deal of carousing at the mayor's collation, and the same might be said about the breakfasts on Christmas morning, to which a stop was put by order of the mayor in 1556. The order states that 'divers of the worshipfull of this Citie haue caused breckfasts to be made in ther houses vpon Christenmas daie in the mornynge Before dyuyne s'uice ended, By reasone wherof manye dysorderid p'sons haue vsed themselues Raythe all the daye after idillie in vyse wantonnes, then yeuen themselves holy to contemplacion and prayre.' Consequently such breakfasts are to be discontinued, and it is suggested that the money which would have been expended upon them

should be given to the poor. In the same order, it is forbidden for mummers to go about the city, or for persons to walk the streets with their faces covered or disguised. So that if this order was obeyed, two old customs seem to have come to an end in the year just mentioned. However, eleven years afterwards there arose a mayor, one Richard Dutton, Esq., who must have had less rigorous ideas as to the keeping of Christmas, for it is stated of him that 'he kepte howse at the Whyte Freeyers, and in all the twelue dayes of Christmas kepte open howse for meate and drynke, at meale tyme, for any that came. All the Christmas tyme was a Lo: of Misrule.' In later years it seems to have been a custom to give the unfortunate debtors confined in the city gaol a feed at Christmas time. The following expression of thanks on the part of the debtors, sent to the *Chester Chronicle* of 1823, might have been drawn up by the gentleman who composed the farewell address to Mr. Dorrit from the dwellers in the Marshalsea. 'The Debtors in the City Gaol beg respectfully to return thanks to the Sheriffs for the very liberal treat they gave them of roast beef, plum pudding, and excellent ale, on Christmas Day; and if anything can enhance the value of the gift, it is the handsome manner in which Mr. Sheriff Ducker ordered the distribution. They also return their thanks to Lord Grosvenor for his gift of two guineas, and to Lord Belgrave for his gift of one guinea, and to Sir John Grey Egerton for his liberal present this day of two guineas—acts of munificence like these speak volumes in their honour.' Another custom, the origin of which is doubtful, that of 'lifting,' is now extinct. It is, or was, up to a few years ago, prevalent in certain parts of England, and wherever it is practised is an unmitigated

nuisance to the unwary stranger, however much it may amuse the natives who practise it. The custom consists in seizing upon every passer-by and lifting him up in a chair, or throwing him up in the air—the former seems to have been the method pursued at Chester—the victim only being released when he has given some money to be expended in liquor. As a general rule the men had one day on which they hoisted women, and the women in turn had their day on which they repaid the compliment to the men. St. George's Day was a public holiday, on which much rejoicing took place. Somewhere in the sixteenth century—the late Mr. T. Hughes thought prior to 1550—races were held on this day on the Roodeye, and certainly early in the eighteenth century there was a prize run for under the name of St. George's Plate, of which the Chester Cup seems to be the lineal descendant. It is perhaps hardly necessary to mention the Chester Race Meeting, the modern representative of this ancient assembly. Maypoles, with the dances associated with them, were not wanting in Chester, and attracted the particular attention of Washington Irving when he visited this country. In his *Sketch-Book*, he says:—'I shall never forget the delight I felt on first seeing a May-pole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close by the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river from the quaint little city of Chester. I had already been carried back into former days by the antiquities of that venerable place, the examination of which is equal to turning over the pages of a black-letter volume, or gazing on the pictures in Froissart. The May-pole on the margin of that poetic stream completed the illusion. My fancy adorned it with wreaths of flowers, and peopled the

green bank with all the dancing revelry of May-day. The mere sight of this May-pole gave a glow to my feelings, and spread a charm over the country for the rest of the day; and as I traversed a part of the fair plains of Cheshire, and the beautiful borders of Wales, and looked from among swelling hills down a long green valley, through which "the Deva wound its wizard stream," my imagination turned all into a perfect Arcadia.' There seem to have been at least two maypoles in Chester, the older one standing permanently at the fork of the Eccleston and Hawarden roads, and a later rival at the bottom of Sty-Lane, Handbridge. Two maypoles are marked in Lavaux's Map, dated 1745. Passing from these festivities of special seasons, there was a jousting-croft, where tournaments took place, which according to Canon Morris was situated just beyond Cow Lane Bridge, between the canal and the bowling-green. The archery butts, were, says the authority just quoted, in the same place. Mention has already been made of the regulations for compelling children to learn the use of the bow and arrow, a piece of knowledge at one time as useful as acquaintance with a rifle now is. There are many records concerning this sport, if that can be called sport, which might at any time become deadly earnest. Amongst others is a collection of rules made in 1562, in which elaborate directions are made in order to provide for the proper use of the butts, to prevent them being too long engrossed by any particular users, forbidding use during time of divine service, etc. One of these rules may be quoted as showing the paternal manner in which the civic authorities looked after the citizens, a form of grandmotherly government which it is difficult to imagine to-day. 'no p'son Shall Speake any Bragginge

words to another (as to say "yf thow darr Shoote with me, or darr bett with me") w'ch woords be often tymes occasion of Inconvenience, vpon payne of ev'ye tyme so doynge to paye o-ijd.'

Less laudable and far more cruel sports found a home in Chester as in all other parts of the island. Cockfighting gave its name to a piece of rising ground outside the walls, towards the end of Cow Lane, which was known as Cockfight Hill. In 1619 William, Earl of Derby, made 'a fair cockpitt under St. John's, in a garden by the water side, to which resorted gent of all parts, and great cocking was used a long while.' The last public cockpit set up in the city seems to have been that near the New Gate, afterwards used as the headquarters of the Rifle Volunteers. The following advertisement reprinted in the *Sheaf* from the *Weekly Courant* of April 5-12, 1738, shows the scale on which these exhibitions were carried out.

CHESTER, *April* 5, 1738.

'This is to give Notice that the Gentlemen of Cheshire, and the Gentlemen of Flintshire, will Weigh upon Monday, the 24th of this instant April at Chester, Thirty-one Cocks each, for Ten Guineas a Battle, and Two Hundred the Main, and Ten Cocks for Bye Battles; they will be fought the four following Mournings, at the White Talbot Cock-Pit.' After cock-fighting was discredited by the city magistrates, badger-baiting appears to have been permitted as a comparatively innocent amusement. The *Chester Chronicle* of February 23, 1787, records the fact that the bell-man of the city on Shrove-Tuesday proclaimed that 'no person or persons must presume to throw at or fight cocks on that day,' a pronouncement

immediately followed by another that 'at two o'clock in the afternoon there would be baited by dogs a large badger.' Bull-baiting was a popular sport, and the mayor was expected to provide a performance of this kind as a part of his entertainment on retiring from office. Hardware, the mayor of 1599-1600 ordered the bull-ring to be taken up, but it was restored by his successor, and in 1619 there was 'a bull baytinge at the high crosse the 2nd daye of October according to Auncient Custome for Mr. Mayor's farewell out of his office.' In earlier days bear-baiting was one of the Chester amusements, and a street called Bearward Lane, affords an evidence of the former existence of this form of sport.

Balls and assemblies are a gentler form of amusement more patronised as public amusements in the eighteenth century than they are now. The new Assembly Rooms in which these entertainments took place was at the Talbot Hotel, whose site is occupied by the Grosvenor Hotel of present days. The subscription to the winter assemblies was for gentlemen, one guinea and a half, and for ladies fifteen shillings. For the assize ball, gentlemen paid three shillings and sixpence for admission and one shilling for tea, and ladies two shillings and sixpence for the former and sixpence for the latter.

After the description which has been given of the life of the city, we may turn our attention to the houses in which its inhabitants lived, and especially to those of them which remain to this day. Earliest amongst these objects are the crypts which still exist under some of the houses. These date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and when first discovered, were believed to have been of a religious nature, so able an observer as Dr. Rock, the author

of *Hierurgia*, maintaining that they were private oratories. They have since been carefully examined by Mr. John Hewitt, who has written a paper on the subject in the *Journal* of the Chester Historical and Archæological Society. These crypts are vaulted, the earlier with only transverse, the later with diagonal ribs, and they are connected internally with the houses by flights of stairs. The oldest is that in Bridge Street, which is forty-two feet six inches in length, fifteen feet three inches in width, and fourteen feet six inches from the present floor to the top of the groining ribs. According to Mr. Hewitt, the present floor is not the original one, for that was only two feet six inches below the level of the street, giving the room a height of ten feet. At some late date an additional four feet were obtained by cutting out the rock on which the crypt was built, for that depth. When this was done the circular-shaped steps, now to be seen, were cut out of the natural rock. The crypt is lighted by a triple lancet window, with a transom, on either side of which is an aumbry or cupboard. From the position which these occupy they were evidently constructed when the floor was at its earlier and higher level, as they are now too high up to be of much use. The door to the staircase is of early English date with a trefoiled head.

The most interesting crypt is that in Watergate Street, in the occupation of Messrs. Quellyn, Roberts, and Co., who kindly permit visitors to inspect it (see tailpiece to this chapter). Though stated to have been built by Ranulph Blundeville in 1180, its date is really about a century later, the architecture being that of the period of the end of Henry III.'s reign, after the rise of decorated Gothic, but before its full development. It is double vaulted, and has a row of

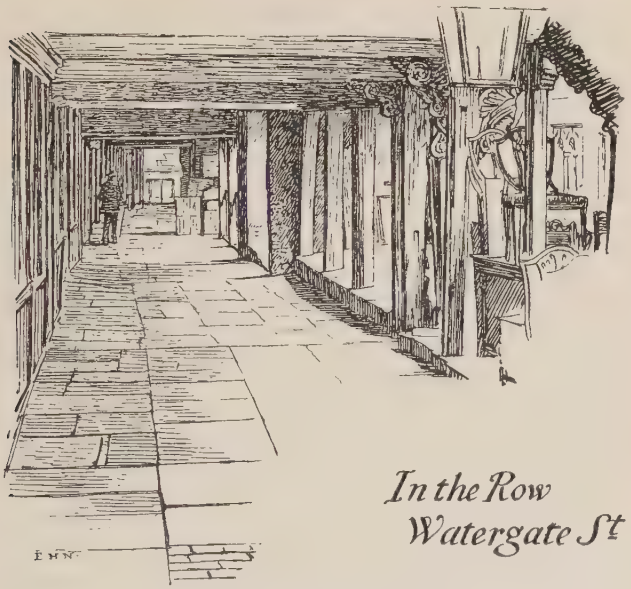
columns in the centre, and thus differs from the other existing crypts, though up to 1861 there was a similar building in the crypt demolished in that year, on the erection of new buildings in Eastgate Street. This crypt is forty-four feet in length, exactly half that measurement in width, and eleven feet in height. It is entered from the street end, through two arches formed in the original external wall, and access to the house above was gained by a doorway in the south wall, still remaining and exhibiting a curious tapering in the width of the internal opening. There are three cupboards in this crypt. The door of entrance to the house above has been spoken of, but incorrectly, as a communication with the single crypt already described in Bridge Street.

Eastgate Street crypt is under Crypt Chambers, and was built within one hundred years of the completion of the one in Bridge Street, according to Mr. Hewitt. It is forty-two feet seven inches in length, thirteen feet ten and a half inches in width, and thirteen feet high. The bold groining ribs of the roof spring from delicately moulded corbels, and are intersected at the apex by a continuous longitudinal rib. In the east wall is an opening which once led to the circular staircase, giving access to the principal floor above. The entrance doorway from the street is not early English, and has been altered in no special style, but the two single lancet windows are original.

From these partially subterranean rooms we pass to another class of house more peculiar to Chester than those which have just been under consideration. These are the colonnaded houses, of which several are still to be seen, notable examples occurring in Foregate and other streets. In these houses the upper

stories overhang the lower to a very considerable extent. A certain amount of overhanging is often seen, and was at one time a common, if not a constant, feature of the half-timbered houses of towns and cities. It allowed a larger amount of house room with a smaller amount of ground-area, than was possible by any other method save that of running the dwelling up for a great number of stories. And it was rendered possible by the comparatively light weight of the materials used in building. There are, of course, examples of this kind of edifice in Chester, and must, at an earlier date, have been many more. But in the colonnaded houses the upper story projects so far that it is no longer possible for its weight to be supported without props passing down to the ground. Hence the front rests upon a series of pillars, and the pathway passes under the first floor of the house. As the windows of the ground floor are on the opposite side of the footpath to that on which the supporting pillars are to be found, the person looking into them or walking past them is completely under cover. Place a number of such houses in series and a colonnade is formed. Put this colonnade on the top of a row of one-storied houses, add steps at intervals so that ready access may be provided to the upper pathway, and you have the celebrated Rows of Chester. These elevated colonnades which are so characteristic a feature of Chester, almost if not quite unique, have always attracted a great deal of attention, and have been the subject of two lengthy and interesting papers in the *Journal* of the Chester Archæological Society. Many efforts have been made to describe this peculiar arrangement. Lysons's Chester says that 'the general appearance of these rows is as if the first stories in front of all the

houses had been laid open, and made to communicate with each other.' Dr. Howson puts the same idea into different words, when he writes of them as public



In the Row Watergate St

highways 'passing through the front part of the drawing-rooms, on the first floor, of a series of houses, the windows being taken out, while the inner parts of these drawing-rooms are converted into shops; the bedrooms being overhead, and the passengers walking over the rooms of the ground story; these rooms again having been turned into shops.' As regards the date of their original erection, it may first be mentioned that neither Giraldus Cambresis (12-13c)

whose account of Chester has already been mentioned, nor Higden (13-14c) make any statements which would lead one to suppose that the Rows or anything resembling them were in existence when they wrote. Canon Morris says that the first indication of the Rows in the city records is in 1331, mention being made in that year of Ironmongers' Row, Baxter Row, and Cooks' Row. He also points out that the following extracts prove that these were rows of the type of which we are now speaking, and not merely lines of houses. 1420: 'William Hope gives to Robert le Vernon, Tailour, a shop under Flesshener Rowe in Watergate Street.' 1498-9: 'Johanna Steyner, widow, and Margeria Bower, widow, are fined 4d. each for making a fire in their solars, and the smoke there ascends up to the Mercers' Rowe to the great nuisance of their neighbours and the passers by.' When the *Vale Royal* was written the Rows were a feature of the time, for the account given in that book runs:—'The buildings of the city are very ancient; and the houses builded in such sort that a man may go dry from one place of the city to another, and never come in the street, but go as it were in galleries, which they call the Roes; which have shops on both sides, and underneath, with divers fair stairs to go up or down into the street; which manner of building I have not heard of in any other place of Christendom. Some will say that the like is at Padua in Italy; but that is not so, for the houses at Padua are built as the suburbs of the city be, that is, upon the ground, upon posts, that a man may go dry underneath them, like as they are at Billingsgate in London, but nothing like to the Roes.' In another place the same book describes the Mercers' Row. 'It is a goodly sight to see the numbers of fair

shops that are in these Rowes, of mercers, grocers, drapers, and haberdashers, especially in the street called the Mercers' Row ; which street with the Bridge Street (being all one street) reaches from the high cross to the bridge, in length 380 paces of geometry, which is above a quarter of a mile.' Thoresby, the Leeds historian, being in Chester in 1682, on a visit to a relative, has left in his diary an account of the Rows. Speaking of the Pentice, he says that there is from it 'a curious prospect into the four best streets : in all which, and, indeed, most of the city, we may pass through the rows in a stormy day without the least rain or prejudice. It is a sort of building peculiar to this city, the like they say not being to be seen in Europe again ; they are as walls chambered above, and cellared below, with shops mostly on both sides.' Camden's *Britannia* and Stukeley in his *Itinerary* both mention the Rows, and the latter writer gives it as his opinion that they are the remains of the Roman porticoes. It is somewhat curious that Leland gives no account of a town which he evidently visited, and which must have interested him so much, but such is the case. He commences at one point an account of the bridge, and there he stops. Probably he meant to complete his account of the city at some other time, but never carried out his intention. However, he does incidentally mention the Rows in connection with his account of Bridgnorth, which he tells us was possessed of similar buildings, though it is not clear from the passage, that the Bridgnorth Rows were not merely lines of colonnaded shops. Whether the Rows are absolutely unique in Europe is a disputed point, some having found parallels which others have refused to accept. Canon Morris says that the main street in Thun, Switzer-

land, which has, on either side, a double row of shops, one above the other, most nearly resembles the arrangement met with in Chester. Most persons who have described them have given the arrangement the praise which it deserves, for that it does deserve praise will hardly be disputed by any one who has had to go shopping on a wet day, and has experienced the satisfaction of being able to go about his business dry-footed and under cover. But there is at least one discordant note quoted by Dr. Brushfield from Bryce's *Grand Gazetteer* (1759) where that writer says 'This was once reckon'd the Glory, but is now the Disgrace and Deformity of Chester; for tho' People are effectually kept from Wet when it rains, hereby, etc., yet the Houses are hereby lessen'd, whose Fronts would otherwise come out into the Streets as far as those Galleries; and the Shops are all so dark and close that a Stranger riding thro' can see none; and 'tis otherwise very incommodious.' The area occupied by the Rows is a definite one. They are to be found on both sides of Upper Bridge Street from White Friars and from St. Michael's Church on the other; on both sides of Watergate Street as far as Weaver and Crook Streets; on both sides of Eastgate Street; and finally in Northgate Street on the east side as far as the first entry. On the west the Row has been removed and a colonnade replaces it. This area corresponds, curiously, says Canon Morris, with that which some authorities have maintained to be the original limit of the Roman Castra, before it was extended first by the Romans themselves, and secondly by Aethelflaed, when she built the Walls of Chester, and enclosed a greater circuit. However much the city was enlarged, there can be no doubt that the greatest buildings and

the fairest edifices, temples and the like, would be clustered round the Prætorium, which in after years came to be the headquarters of the Mediæval Age—the High Cross with the Pentice Court for civic business, and the pillory and stocks for public punishment. Various theories have been put forward to explain these curious buildings, for it is obvious that to say that they are colonnades erected on a row of one-storied shops does not account for their existence. Why this method should have been adopted is another matter, and it is not one which is easy to clear up. One view is that the Rows are the direct descendants of the Roman porticoes, as Stukeley believed. This theory has little to commend it, for we know quite definitely that Chester was in a ruinous state for a long time after the Romans left it, and, even had they possessed such buildings, for which there is no evidence, they must almost certainly have disappeared, long before the erection of the predecessors of the Rows which we now have. Others have suggested that the level of the roadway of the four principal streets of the city in which the Rows exist has gradually become depressed, so that the Rows themselves represent its original position. This view is put out of court by the fact that discoveries of Roman remains have proved that the present level of the road is at least not lower than it was in Roman times. A third theory, which may also be dismissed, is that which accounts for the Rows by supposing that they were so constructed to afford a ready means of providing street fortifications against the incursions of the Welsh. This is the view adopted by Borrow, who, in his *Wild Wales* says:—'The Chester row is a broad arched stone gallery running parallel with the street within the

façades of the houses; it is partly open on the side of the street, and just one story above it. Within the rows, of which there are three or four, are shops, every shop being on that side which is farthest from the street. All the best shops in Chester are to be found in the rows. These rows, to which you ascend by stairs up narrow passages, were originally built for the security of the wares of the principal merchants against the Welsh. Should the mountaineers break into the town, as they frequently did, they might rifle some of the common shops, where their booty would be slight, but those which contained the necessary articles would be beyond their reach; for at the first alarm the doors of the passages, up which the stairs led, would be closed, and all access to the upper streets cut off, from the open arches of which missiles of all kinds could be discharged upon the intruders, who would be soon glad to beat a retreat.' There is no evidence to show that the Welsh ever got inside Chester, though they raided and burnt Handbridge, its suburb. On the contrary we have every reason to suppose that the Walls and Gates were quite strong enough to keep out any such foe. Canon Morris thinks that though the Rows are not due to imitation of the Roman buildings, they are an indirect result of the Roman occupation or rather of the Roman withdrawal. His explanation of their origin, adopted by some, though it must be confessed that the evidence obtained from excavations renders it rather difficult of acceptance, may now be quoted in order to conclude the consideration of this peculiar feature of Chester architecture. When, says this writer, after the long interval of comparative desolation extending over several centuries, and the alternating ravages of Saxon and Dane, Chester

became, once more, under the firm rule of its Norman earls, a city of settled inhabitants, and, for the sake of its commanding position both from a military and commercial point of view, an increasing resort for merchants and traders, that same circumscribed area, to which reference has been made (as is the case in the city of London), would be the most valuable for trade. The course of the four streets would have been kept free and unencumbered for traffic even during Saxon and Danish times; but along the line would remain the ruins of the dismantled Roman buildings, which as each century passed would have been covered more and more deeply with rubbish and soil. Traders would erect their shops along the level of the four main streets—Bridge Street, Watergate, Eastgate, and Northgate, which in mediæval times were the only *streets* so called, all the other lines of traffic being called lones, or lanes, with the single exception of Pepper Street. At first these shops on the level of the street were not shops, but *seldae*, mere sheds, often movable, such as those which were set up at the great Annual Fairs, and, as we learn from the agreement between the Abbot of St. Werburgh and the Mayor of Chester, were to be removed immediately at the end of the Fair. But the frontage and position was a valuable one, and other traders coming in would wish to enjoy the same advantage. What more natural than that they should erect on the higher ground formed of the débris of Roman buildings rising behind these *seldae* or traders' sheds, their own places of business. These new buildings, perhaps of a more permanent character, would have the advantage of facing the principal business streets. They would be the *shopae*, of a better character than the *seldae*, open rooms with wide openings closed with shutters. Each of these *shopae*

would have its own stairway or 'grese' as in Lower Bridge Street of the present day. The result would be that, as in London, the several stories would be in the occupation of different tradesmen—the lower, on the level of the street, would belong to one; the upper, of better character, on a higher level, to another trader. There was also in mediæval times a third, the lowest, the range of cellars, which were very common, and, as now, occupied by dealers in charcoal, coals, firewood, vegetables, etc. Thus, in each street, there would be a threefold series of business places, rising one above the other—the cellars, the *seldae*, the *shopae*. The *shopae* in the row would not have, at first, any projection in front. But gradually, here and there, an enterprising tradesman would put up pillars in front of his establishment, carry forward his living apartments beyond the ordinary line, and at once enlarge his house and provide a permanent covering in front of his shop, with a sloping board for the display of his wares, so that the passer-by would have to run the gauntlet on both sides from his vigorous apprentices crying 'What d'ye lack?' 'What'll ye buy?' The Canon concludes by pointing out that an engraving of 1700 shows that the Rows had not obtained the completeness of the present day, or even of Cuitt's time—some of the houses not extending over the passage of the Rows. The non-continuation of the line of Rows in the quarter occupied by the Town Hall and cathedral is accounted for (1) by the extension of the Abbey buildings and precincts which occupied the ground from early times; and (2) by the necessity for keeping free a large space for the great annual fairs which were held for several days in front of the Abbey Gate.

A few from amongst the numerous old houses which

Chester still possesses require special notice from their intrinsic merit, and from the interest which they have for visitors to the city. Amongst these 'God's Providence House' in Watergate Street has long taken a first place. The edifice which strangers now view with such interest is not the ancient house but a new and much more ornate structure, erected in 1862, and containing a few beams from the older edifice. The original building, shown in the initial to the next chapter, if we may trust to the date which it bore and which has been transferred to its modern representative, was erected in 1652, and bore on a beam under the principal window the inscription 'God's Providence is mine inheritance.' A popular story states that this inscription was put up because the house which bore it was the only one spared by the plague. The plague, however, occurred five years before this house was built, and the inscription on it is not original or unique, for it is that which Richard Boyle, the 'great' Earl of Cork, chose for his motto in 1620. It is, or was, also over the doorway of Quirck's Almshouses at Minehead in Somerset. No more is required to account for its presence on this house than the supposition that its unknown owner desired, as others have done before and after him, to adorn his dwelling-place with a pious motto. Near to God's Providence House is another fine, though, of course, considerably restored example of half-timbered work, known as Bishop Lloyd's Palace, though it is doubtful whether it was the property of the prelate of that name. The date of the house is 1615, which is the same as that of the death of the bishop. The panels on this house represent the Fall, Cain slaying Abel, Abraham offering up his son, the arms of James I., what are supposed to be the arms of

Bishop Lloyd, a Latin inscription with the date and (?) Our Lady of Sorrows. This house, now occupied by the Young Women's Christian Association, can be viewed, and contains several rooms with excellent plaster ceilings and good fireplaces. The Palace of the Stanley family is in a small court off Watergate Street, beyond Nicholas Street, and bears the date 1591. It is perhaps the least altered of the old houses, and well worth seeing. It is of black and white architecture and has three gables. The furthest part from the road contains the hall, with a hiding-place upstairs and the entrance to an underground passage below. The middle part of the house was the kitchen, and above it is a room said to have been occupied several times by King Charles I. The Stanleys of Alderley held the Sergeantry of the Watergate, and in this house the Earl of Derby spent the day before his execution at Bolton. What remains of the Gamull house is in Bridge Street (Gamull Terrace), and here Sir Francis Gamull entertained and lodged Charles I. during the Civil War. Sir Francis, who was then mayor of the city, was the son of Thomas Gamull, Recorder of Chester. It is not known whether he was a knight or a baronet, for there is, on account of the disturbed nature of the times, no record left of the dignity which was conferred upon him or of the date when he obtained it. As mentioned in a previous chapter (p. 62) he was one of the six Commissioners, amongst those appointed to arrange terms for the surrender of Chester, who differed from the settlement eventually arrived at. On this account he suffered greatly in his estate, for he was removed by the Parliament from all the public offices which he held. The positions of other houses worthy of notice will be found in the Itinerary at the end of

the volume. There are some fine old inns still remaining, of which perhaps the best is the 'Bear and Billet' in Lower Bridge Street[1]; a fine view of this house is obtained during the walk round the walls.

Ancient Houses

STANLEY PALACE

[1] See fig. p. 252.

This inn was the mansion of the Earls of Shrewsbury, who held a moiety of the sergeantry of the Bridgegate, which they purchased in 1660. The house appears to have been erected in 1664, and is a fine, comparatively little-restored example of black and white work. In the angle of the gable may be seen the shutters of the opening into the storeroom for grain and suchlike articles of domestic use, occupying the position commonly assigned to that purpose in houses of this date. The 'Old King's Head,' in the same street, is another building which, though much restored, is of considerable interest. The same may be said of the 'Edgar's Tavern,' also in Lower Bridge Street, at the corner of Shipgate Street, and of the 'Falcon,' of great interest in its design, in Bridge Street. The 'Yacht' Inn,[1] at the corner of Nicholas Street and Watergate Street, was once the principal hostelry in Chester, and is still a very interesting house. It is said that Dean Swift once stayed in it on one of his journeys between London and Dublin. Further it is related that he asked the cathedral dignitaries to sup with him, but that with one consent they all made excuse. Annoyed at this the Dean scratched with the diamond of his ring, on one of the windows, a couplet not very complimentary either to the city or its clergy.

> 'Rotten without and mouldering within,
> The place and its clergy are all near akin.'

The 'Old Custom House' in Watergate Street, just below Weaver Street, dated 1637, is worth notice. The old 'Blue Posts Inn,' famous for the story of the substitution of a pack of cards for a warrant against Irish Protestants, is now a shop and is situated in Eastgate Street.

This chapter may now be concluded by a brief

[1] See fig. p. 269.

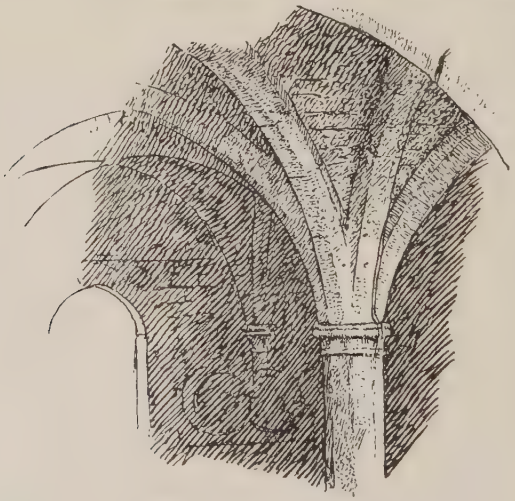
account of the once famous port of Chester, from which sailed, upon his disastrous voyage, King, the hero of Milton's 'Lycidas.' That there was a very free communication between Chester and Dublin has already been shown, and it may be added, as proving the frequency of communication with Irish ports, that in the eighteenth century, a freeman of Wexford, which, though now a place of little importance, once had some note as a port, was also free of Chester and Liverpool. Even in the beginning of that century the trade between Chester and Dublin was of importance, for in 1702, the mayor, aldermen and merchants of the city drew up a petition to Queen Anne, in which they state 'that the Prosperity of the said Citty doth chiefly depend upon Trade at Sea and particularly to and from the Citty of Dublin and other parts of the Kingdome of Ireland. That in the time of War the Irish Channell is greatly infested with Privatiers, invited thither by the prospect of intercepting the Coale Fleetes, and other ships with persons of great quality and very valuable goods, passing to and from that kingdome. . . . That your Petitioners, by the sad experience of their great and frequent losses during the last warr, have just reason to fear that they shal be utterly disabled to serve your Majesty or to carry on their Trade, unless due Provision be made for their security during the present warr with France.' The petition goes on to ask that a ship or ships of war may cruise constantly in the Channel for the protection of the Trade carried in ships from one country to the other. The regulations of the port in the time of Eadweard the Confessor are given in Domesday, where it appears that 'if any ships came or departed to or from the port of the city without the King's license, the King and

the Earl had from every man who was in them xl shillings. If any ship came contrary to the King's command, and against his peace, then the King and the Earl had both ship, crew and all the cargo. But if she came in the king's peace and with his license then they who were in her peaceably sold all things as they had, but on the ship's departure the King and the earl had tenpence, from every last. If the ship had marten skins on board, the King's prefect might command the owners to sell to no one until they had been first shown to him.' The importance of Chester as a shipping place in the reign of Henry IV. is shown by the fact that at that period the mayor and sheriffs jointly held the office of admiral in the king's fleet, whilst in 1528, Henry VIII.'s vice-admiral, by Letters Patent, declared that 'the lands possessions and all and singular harbours within the dominions of the aforesaid liberty as well by land as by sea, viz., from Arnold's Eyre to Eaton Weir, also the tenants, farmers, and all other men, all and singular within the same liberty have been and are fully exempt from all manner of jurisdiction and power of the Admiral of England and his officials whatsoever, so far that all punishments, corrections, Deodands, Waveson, Flotteson, Jotteson, and lagason and wrecks, and all other casualties, contingencies whatsoever whensoever howsoever by land, water and sea, with all and singular their appurtenances within the aforesaid liberties are found to belong to the foresaid mayor and citizens of the forementioned city of Chester, used moreover according to custom prescribed from time and for time immemorial.' Moreover, even in 1569, Liverpool, which has now so far outstripped its rival in the shipping interest, was still legally 'a creek within the port of Chester.'

Here it should be noted that the 'Port' of Chester included not merely that part of the Dee which is near the city, but a much larger extent of water, even as has been pointed out, the Mersey at Liverpool. In fact, at least in Elizabethan times, Parkgate, a small place some miles from Chester on the Wirral Peninsula, was the main point of arrival and departure. It was from here that 'Lycidas' King set sail. The Port of Chester

But the decay of the port, due to the gradual silting-up of the bed of the Dee, had commenced in much earlier days than these. In 1445 Henry VI., in Letters Patent, mentions that 'for forty years now last past it has been, that the great flow of water at the said port by which our merchants had a course and return with their ships and merchandise to our city is taken away from the harbour by the wreck of sea sand.' It is added that no merchant ship can approach within twelve miles of the city, and a remission of fifty pound of the annual fee-farm was made for fifty years. Again in the reign of Richard III., the difficulty of access by any ship of burden is referred to in a charter of 1484. Efforts, assisted by the Queen and her Council, were made in the reign of Elizabeth to resuscitate the trade on the Dee. One hundred years later, in 1658, there are said to have been seventeen vessels trading with Dublin. In the 11th and 12th of William III., an Act was passed by which powers were given to make the Dee fit for the navigation of vessels of one hundred tons burden. A further Act was passed in the reign of George II., (1732-33) in which it is stated that the troubles of the port arise from 'the sands, soil and ground not bearing Grass, commonly called the *White Sands*, from the City of Chester to the sea and lying between the County of Chester off the North

side and the County of Flint on the south side, of great breadth in most places, and the said river not being navigable is chiefly owing to the breadth of the said sands, and to the shifting of the Channel from one side thereof to the other as the winds and the tides vary.' The Act proceeds to state that these sands are not likely to be of any particular use, and empowers N. Kinderley and his assigns to keep the channel of the Dee navigable and to collect certain dues. No measures however have been successful in preventing the silting-up of the stream, and the deadly sands which have ruined Chester as a sea-port town can clearly be seen by travellers between that city and the coast of North Wales, particularly at low tide, as the train passes their wide banks and the narrow channel of water which runs between them.



THE CRYPT IN WATERGATE STREET

The Bear and Billet Inn Chester

CHAPTER XII

SOME DISTINGUISHED CESTRIANS AND VISITORS TO THE CITY

GOD'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE BEFORE RECONSTRUCTION

IN the course of the foregoing chapters occasion has been taken to mention some of the distinguished persons who have made the ancient city their home, temporary or permanent, during its long history. Of necessity, however, some names which must not be forgotten when a history, however brief, is being written of the city on the Dee, have been omitted or have received scant attention in previous pages. To these it is now proposed that some fuller meed of recognition shall be given. Of more or less permanent residents in the city the name of HENRY BRADSHAW may first be mentioned. He was a monk of St. Werburgh's Abbey and also a native of the city. He wrote two works on Chester, *De Antiquitate et Magnificentia Urbis Cestriae*, 1513,

and a Life of St. Werburgh. Of very different character is his namesake JOHN BRADSHAW, the regicide, once Chief-Justice of Chester. This individual was born at Marple in Cheshire and baptized in the parish church of Stockport, in the register of which appears the entry, 'December, 1602.—John, the sonne of Henrye Bradshaw of Marple, was baptized on the 10th,' with the addition in a later hand of the single word, 'traitor.' Bradshaw was a student of Gray's Inn, was called to the bar in 1627, and practised his profession, says Milton, who was his friend, 'with singular success.' Be that as it may, he first came into public note as the President of the tribunal by order of which Charles I. was done to death. As a reward for his performances on this occasion he was made permanent President of the Council of State, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and received the grant of estates amounting to the value of £2000 per annum. It is, however, as Chief-Justice of Chester that he comes under our notice here. One letter from him in this capacity has already been quoted, that in which he reports upon the failure of the 'Ingagement' and gives reasons for its want of success. Another letter transcribed from the Cowper MSS., and given in the *Sheaf*, was written shortly after he had been appointed to the Chief-Justiceship, and a portion of it may be quoted here as conveying his views and intentions with regard to the city. It is endorsed 'ffor the Right wor'p'll Mr. Robert Wright Maio'r of Chester, this: postis payd,' and runs:

SIR,—I rec'd one from you & 3 other Ald'rmen by this last Post w'ch is the first Tyme I hard from you synce I was by ye p'lyam't appoynted for y't service

of Chester'—part of the letter is here incompletely decipherable—'nor shall I be lesse affectionate to yo'r Citie then any of my pr'decessors in Office haue bene, wherein I may doe you reall good: And I shall hope also That yo'rself & ye oth'r Gouernors of ye Cytie & Assystants in Offyce to you will be myndfull of ye Cyties true welfare w'ch at pr'sent consysts in nothing more then in a Cheerefull & Constant complyance w'th ye Dyrections of p'lyam't & in them w'th ye Kingdomes true Interest w'ch is the Duty & Dyscretyon of euery honest Englyshman to doe. And in so doing & not oth'rwyse no man shall more willingly comply w'th you nor wysh himself more enabled to serue you, then yo'r old Acquayntance & wel wyshing ffryend, Jo: Bradshawe.

Grayes Inne, 1 *Aug*: 1648.

'No friend to monarchy' as Whitelocke says of him, he was so convinced a republican as to get himself into hot water with Cromwell, who made two attempts to deprive him of his Chief-Justiceship. After the death of the Protector he was made one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal. He strenuously objected to the seizure of the Speaker Lenthall, by the army, in the House of Commons. He died in 1659 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, but after the Restoration, his remains with those of Cromwell and Ireton were disinterred and hung on a gibbet. Proceeding in alphabetical order Randolph Caldecott, whose drawings were once so familiar to readers of the Christmas numbers of the *Graphic* and of the childrens' books illustrated by him, must next be mentioned. He was born at Chester in 1846 and educated at the King's School in that city.

George Cuitt, though born at Richmond in Yorkshire, in 1779, is associated as an artist with the city of Chester, for there he settled himself as a drawing master in 1804. He published a number of etchings, that being the branch of art to which he principally devoted himself, representing the ancient buildings of Chester, as well as the castles of North Wales and the abbeys of Lancashire. Having, at the age of forty, made a sufficient income upon which to retire, he left Chester, and returned to his native place, where he died at the age of seventy-four. In 1821 his collection, according to the advertisement of the sale, consisting of 'Several Hundred Exquisite Drawings in Pencil and Sepia which Mr. Cuitt has devoted twelve years of professional labours in executing, and from which no selections have been made,' was disposed of by public auction, this event taking place at the time when he was leaving the city which had been for some years his home. There is a *History of the City of Chester*, published in 1815 at Chester, by T. Poole, and illustrated with five very beautiful etchings by Cuitt, which has sometimes been supposed to have been written by its illustrator. It was, however, the work of Dr. John Margaret Becker Pigot, once Senior Honorary Physician to the General Infirmary of the city.

Admiral Sir Peter Denis (or Dennis) was born in Chester and baptized in the Cathedral on the 13th of April, 1712. He was educated at the King's School, of which his father was one of the masters, and adopting the navy as a profession was lieutenant under Anson in his voyage round the world in 1740. He was in command of the *Centurion* at the battle of Cape Finisterre, and fired the first broadside during

that engagement. Amongst other noteworthy incidents in his career he was one of the Court Martial which tried and condemned Admiral Byng. He led the attack at Belle Isle, and after the conflict was told by Sir Edward Hawke, in the presence of his brother officers, that 'he had behaved like an angel.' He was also the officer selected by King George to bring over to this country Queen Charlotte. He was made a baronet in 1767, commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean squadron in 1771, and died in 1778.

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

Henry Gee, the celebrated reforming mayor, some of whose edicts have already been mentioned, was not a man of national celebrity, but his is a name which must not be omitted when Chester worthies are being commemorated. If for nothing else, the fact that he was, so far as the present writer is aware, the first person to establish compulsory education, makes his name worthy of mention. He was a draper, and occupied the position of mayor in the years 1533 and 1539. The late Mr. Thomas Hughes sums up the doings of his mayoralties in the short account of his life which appeared in the *Cheshire Sheaf*. 'With a high hand and an unswerving purpose,' he says, 'he put the Corporation house in order. He set out in a Table the "Gabull rent" of the city, and the names of the tenants and the property chargeable therewith; he drew up and published a List of the Customs due at the Port of Chester, and he settled the Fees in other ways payable to the Civic Officials. He perambulated the Boundaries of the County of the City, which it would seem had not been done since the days of the Black Prince, he compiled, too, a Rental of the City's houses and lands, to stop the peculations that had

long previously been going on therein, and he put his stern foot on all corrupt appointments to offices of trust in the municipality. He banished the "Idle Begars and Vacabounds" from their dens in the city, he regulated the Corn Market, he established the first attempt at a school board, he kept up the quality of fish in the market, and at the same time kept down the price. He would not allow giddy unmarried girls to keep common ale-houses, he stopped immorality at Churchings and other feasts; in short, there was not a crying abuse in Chester to which old Henry Gee did not apply a vigorous remedy.' He died in 1545, 'living long enough,' says Mr. Hughes, 'to "see in" the Reformation, but without, it would seem, quite falling in with the new religion.' He was buried in Holy Trinity Church, and over his remains was placed a brass with the inscription, 'Here vnder lyeth buryed the body of Henry Gee, twoo tymes mayer of this Cetye of Chester, whyche d'cessyd the vj day of September, An'o d'ni m'o v'c xlv'o, on whois soulle ih'u haue mercy.'

Thomas Harrison, like Cuitt, was a native of Richmond in Yorkshire, where he was born in 1744. In his early professional days as an architect, he went to Rome, where his services were much appreciated by the Pope, who presented him with a gold and a silver medal. In Chester he built the gaol and county courts, together with other buildings, but his chief monument is the fine one-span bridge over the Dee, which must attract the attention of every visitor to Chester.

Matthew Henry was the second son of the Rev. Philip Henry, M.A., who was ejected from the living of Worthenbury as a consequence of the Act of

Uniformity. Matthew was born Oct. 18, 1662, at a farm called Broad Oak, Isycoed, Flintshire, to which place his father had removed from Worthenbury but a fortnight before. At first destined for the law, he studied at Gray's Inn, but coming to Chester in 1686, one year after his entry upon legal studies, he announced his intention of becoming a dissenting minister, and a year afterwards was appointed pastor in Chester. In 1712 he removed to Hackney. It was, however, in Chester that he commenced his *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, a work which he never finished, since he died when he had reached the end of the Acts of the Apostles. Much of this book is said to have been written in a summer-house still existing at the back of the house in which he lived in Bolland's Court. He died at Nantwich in 1714, and is buried in Holy Trinity Church, Chester, where a brass thus commemorates him and his first wife. 'Mortalis exuvias hic juxta deposuit Katherina Henry, filia unica Samuelis Hardware armigeri, Conjux admodum dilecta Matthaei Henry S.S. Evangelii ministri, quae primo partu (filiola superstite) variolis extincta ad patriam migravit, 14° die Februarii, 1688-9, anno aetat. 25. Posuit in lachrymis viduatus conjux. Idem Mattheus Henry pietatis et ministerii officiis strenue perfunctus, per labores, S.S. literis scrutandis et explicandis impensos confectum corpus huic dormitorio commisit 22ndo die Junii, 1714, anno aetat. 52. susceptis ex Maria, Roberti Warburton, armigeri, filia, moerente jam vidua, unico filio et quinque filiabus superstitibus.' The chapel in which Matthew Henry once officiated is in Trinity Street, and is now a Unitarian place of worship. Its exterior has been much altered but it still contains a good seventeenth-century pulpit with sounding-board,

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

which were those in use when the great Presbyterian divine was its pastor.

Ranulph Higden was a Benedictine monk of the abbey of St. Werburgh about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and there died about 1360. He is said to have been the author of the celebrated *Miracle Plays*, but perhaps his fame more depends upon his *Polychronicon*. An earlier compilation from several of the old chronicles and books on natural history then in existence had been made by one Roger, a monk in the same monastery, about the beginning of the fourteenth century. Higden's work was an amplification of this compilation and deals with the countries of the known world, especially Britain, and the history of the world from its creation down to Higden's own time. In 1387, Trevisa, who was chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, translated Higden's Latin into the English of the period. This text was by Caxton, 'a lytel embelysshed fro tholde,' and by him also continued down to the year 1460. His continuation he entitles 'liber ultimus': it was finished in 1482 and shortly afterwards published. There are twenty-six known copies of this book in existence, of which only two are perfect. An almost perfect copy fetched £477, 15s. in 1865, when prices did not rule nearly so high as they do now. Trevisa's translation contains a curious account of Chester, of which a few passages may here be quoted. 'The citee of legiouns, that is, Chestre, stondeth in the merche of Engelond toward Wales, bytwene tweie armes of the see that hatte (are called) Dee and Merse. This citee in tymes of Britouns was heed and chief citee of al Venedocia, that is, North Wales. The foundour of this citee is vnknowe, for who that seeth the foundementis of the grete stones

wolde rather mene that it were Romayns work, other work of geauntes, than work i-made by settynge of Bretouns. This citee somtyme in Brittische speche heet Caerleon, Legecestria in Latyn, and hatte now Cestria in Latyn, and Chestren in Englishe, and the Citee of Legiouns also. For there lay a wynter the legiouns of knyghtes that Iulius Cesar sente for to wynne Irlond; and afterwards Clawdius Cesar sente legiouns out of that citee for to winne the ilonds that hatte Orcades. What euere William Malmesbury by tellynge of other men mette of this citee, this citee hath plente of lyflode of corne, of flesche, and of fische, and specialliche of pris salmoun. That citee fongeth (takes in) grete merchaundise, and sendeth out also. Also nygh this cytee beeth salt welles, metal and oor. Northumbres destroyed this citee somtyme; but afterward Elfleda, lady of Mercia bulde it age' and made it wel more. In this citee beeth weies vnder erthe, with vawtes of stoon werk wonderliche i-wroggt, thre chambres worke greet stones i-graued with olde men names there ynne. . . . This is the citee that Ethelfride, Kyng of Northumber, destroyed; and slogh there faste by nygh two thousand monkes of the mynistre of Bangor. This is the citee that kyng Edgar com to som tyme with seuene kynges that were suget to hym.'

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

The name of Randle Holme was borne by no less than four persons, of four generations, all heralds or heraldic painters and all men of some note, whose lives have been carefully detailed by the late Mr. Earwaker in the *Journal* of the Chester Archæological and Historic Society. Randle I. was born about the year 1571 and died in 1655. He married the widow of Thomas Chaloner of Chester, who was himself a herald and had been Ulster King at Arms. Holme

inherited the papers of his wife's first husband, and may possibly have succeeded him as deputy in Chester of the Heralds' College, for to that position he was appointed by William Segar, Norroy, in 1600-01. He was sheriff in 1615, and in 1631 was selected to be knighted, a dignity offered solely for the purpose of obtaining a contribution for the royal exchequer. He refused this offer and paid ten pounds as composition for not complying with the royal request. In 1633 he was made mayor and during his term of office was shrewdly berated by the Earl Marshal, Thomas Arundel, Earl of Howard, to whom he had neglected to pay sufficient attention when that nobleman visited Chester. A prominent Royalist, he was fined a sum of £160 for the part which he had taken in the siege of Chester. He was buried in St. Mary's Church. Randle II. was his second son, followed his father's business of a 'painter,' and was his partner in his official duties in connection with the Heralds' College. In 1643, during the Civil War, he was elected mayor of the city. He lived but a short time after his father's death and, like him, was buried in St. Mary's Church, where there is a monument to his memory erected by his son and successor Randle III. This member of the family, who has sometimes been called the 'great Randle,' was baptized in St. Mary's Church on the 30th December 1627. He took up his father's business and became a member of the same city company. In 1664 he was appointed 'sewer of the chamber in extraordinary to his Majesty' King Charles II. The 'sewer' in a household was the officer who placed dishes on the table at meals and removed them when done with. He may also have had to taste their contents in order to see that they had been properly cooked, and was expected to

bring water for the hands of the guests. In Randle's case the office was probably a sinecure, and carried no salary, though there were some valuable privileges connected with it, which are detailed in the writ of appointment. 'His person is not to be arrested or deteyned without leaue from me first had and obtained, neither is he to beare any publick office whatsoeuer, nor to be impanelled on any enquest or jury, nor to be warned to serve at assizes or sessions whereby he may pretend excuse to neglect his Maiesties service but is to attend the same according to his oath and duty.' From this writ it follows that he was incapable of holding office as sheriff or mayor as his two forefathers had done. Randle III. was involved in disputes with the Heralds' College, for it was asserted that he had usurped their privileges in marshalling funerals, preparing coats of arms and hatchments and receiving fees for the same. Accordingly William Dugdale, Norroy, brought an action against him in the Court of Common Pleas and recovered £20 and costs. Moreover the Diary of Dugdale's Visitation records several instances in which he had pulled down Atchievements which had been set up by Randle. In the end he seems to have come to terms with the College and to have acted as their representative at Chester, for Cheshire, Lancashire, and the six counties of North Wales. In 1688 he published his great work entitled 'The Academy of Armoury, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon Containing The several variety of Created Beings, and how born in Coats of Arms both Foreign and Domestick. With The Instruments used in all Trades and Sciences, together with their Terms of Art. Also the Etymologies, Definitions and Historical Observations on the same, Explicated and Explained according

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

to our Modern Language. Very useful for all Gentlemen, Scholars, Divines, and all such as desire any knowledge in Arts and Sciences. Every Man shall Camp by his Standard, and under the Ensign of his Father's House. Numb. 2. 2. Put on the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the Assaults of the Devil; above all take the Shield of Faith. Ephes. 6. 11. 16. By Randle Holme, of the City of Chester Gentleman Sewer in Extraordinary to his late Majesty King Charles 2. And sometimes Deputy for the Kings of Arms. Chester, Printed for the Author, MDCLXXXVIII.' This is a folio volume of over eleven hundred pages, and containing fifty full-sized plates. Large as it is, the work was never completed, for at the end of the first part of the third book, the author states that though the remainder is ready for the press, it wants 'Encouragers for the Work.' He proceeds to inform his public that he is not 'at present able or sufficient to carry on so great a Work without Assistance, for the Times are so Hard, Trading so Dead, Money scarce, Paper wanting (else at Double, if not Treble Rates to that I first begun) Wages great, and daily Layings out so much, and above all Gentlemen's Coldness of Zeal in promoting the same, that amongst the many Thousands of Noble Families and Rich Estates in our parts of the Kingdom, viz. Cheshire, Lancashire and the six Counties of North Wales, not above Twenty have advanced Money to the Work.' The collections for the book, which he commenced to make in 1649, when he was twenty-two years of age, and continued to gather for forty years, fill ten small folio volumes amongst the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. It should be mentioned that this book is by no means purely what it purports to be,

a manual of Heraldry, but is, as Ormerod puts it, 'the strangest jumble on Natural History, Mineralogy and Surgery, occasionally diversified by Palmistry, Hunter's terms, the Cockpit laws, Diseases, an Essay on Time and on Men punished in Hell. Introducing each subject successively as the fancied bearing of an armorial coat.' This Randle was one of the earliest Free-Masons known to have existed in Chester, and in his Academy of Armory he speaks of this body thus:—'I cannot but Honor the Felloship of the Masons because of its Antiquity; and the more as being a Member of that Society, called Free-Masons. In being conversant amongst them I have observed the use of these several Tools following, some whereof I have seen born in Coats Armour.' He lived in a house in Bridge Street, which seems to have been the building known as Lamb Row. A picture of this, from the needle of Cuitt, is to be seen in Pigot's *History of Chester* to which attention has already been called. It fell down in 1821. Randle III. was thrice married and died on the 12th of March, 1699-1700. He was buried, like his father and grandfather, in St. Mary's Church. Randle IV. was the eldest son of Randle III. by his first wife. Like his father he was a member of the Stationers' Company, and like him too was Deputy to Norroy King at Arms. He died in 1707, and was buried in the same church as his progenitors. The four Randles collected an immense number of manuscript notes about Chester matters, which passed from Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, to the British Museum, where they form a part of that collection known as the Harleian MSS. The total number of volumes in the Holme series is about two hundred and seventy, and each volume on an average contains

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

about two hundred and fifty closely written folio pages.

It would be a piece of ingratitude on the part of the present writer if no mention were made of the name of Thomas Hughes, for a number of years the editor of the *Cheshire Sheaf*, from which so many quotations have been made in the pages of this book. Mr. Hughes was born in Chester in 1826, educated at the King's School, and apprenticed to a bookseller. He was a most industrious archæologist, and was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He was one of the Founders of the Chester Archæological Society and the author of several books dealing with the history and antiquities of his native city. But perhaps the most remarkable fruit of his labours is the *Cheshire Sheaf*, a kind of local Notes and Queries which appeared for many years in the columns of the *Chester Courant*. This collection of notes is a mine of information on topics connected with Chester and the neighbouring parts of England and Wales, and owes many of its most interesting contributions to the pen of its editor.

George Jeffreys, the notorious president of the Bloody Assizes, was Lord Chief-Justice of Chester as well as being Chief-Justice of the King's Bench and Lord Chancellor of England. His connection with the city must not be left unnoticed, but no further mention of his history seems here to be needful.

Daniel King, the publisher of the *Vale Royal*, of which mention has several times been made, was born in Chester in 1630 and apprenticed to the Randle Holme of the period. He died in 1661, having removed to London before his book appeared.

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

Charles Kingsley, the author, was for a time a canon of Chester, and his name will remain connected with the city as the founder of the Natural History Society, whose collections form such an attractive part of the Grosvenor Museum.

George Ormerod was not a native of the city, having been born at Manchester in 1785, but he was educated at the King's School, Chester. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries, a Semitic scholar, and is best known as the author of the *History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, a work in three large folio volumes of which a revised edition was brought out not many years ago by Dr. Helsby.

A much earlier antiquary was Archdeacon Robert Rogers, who died in 1559. Amongst the Harleian mss. are several volumes by him, including 'A Breauarye of some few Collections of the Citie of Chester, gathered out of some fewe Writers (by Mr. Robert Rogers); and here sett downe by Mr. David Rogers, his son: a.d. 1609. This Treatise is continued by the said David and others to the year 1652.'

Sir John Vanbrugh, Clarencieux King of Arms, the architect of Blenheim, and the author of *The Relapse* and *The Provoked Wife*, was born in or near Chester, and was educated at the King's School in that city.

William Webb should be mentioned as one of the authors of the *Vale Royal*, which appeared in 1656. He was an Oxford graduate, and had as a colleague in the book William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant at Arms.

Owing to its situation on the road to Ireland, whether as a seaport or as an important place on the

coach or rail-road to Holyhead, Chester has had many noteworthy visitors. Of some of these whose connection with the city presents points of interest, mention will now be made, and, as before, in alphabetical order.

Henry Cromwell, the son of the Protector, was in Chester in 1653, on his way to Ireland, where he had been appointed Lord Lieutenant. Thence he made his way to Holyhead, from which he wrote, 5th of July, 'I am heer waiting uppon the Lorde for a winde, and have bin soe since Monday. The weather hathe bin very bade that we durst not venter to sea.' By this time it will be noticed the point of departure was Holyhead and not Chester or Parkgate, but, from whichever place travellers elected to start, their letters show how much delay was occasioned, as in this case, by contrary winds, in the days before steam alleviated the miseries of those that go down to the sea in ships.

Grimaldi, the celebrated clown, was in Chester and put up at the White Lion Hotel. Of his experiences there a very amusing account, too long to be quoted here, is given by Dickens in his *Life of Grimaldi the Clown.*

Samuel Johnson was in Chester in 1774 with Mr., Mrs., and Miss Thrale. 'I have come to Chester,' he said, 'Madam, I cannot tell how, and far less can I tell how to get away from it,' and describes some of his experiences in the city. 'We walked,' he says, 'round the walls, which are complete, and contain one mile three quarters and one hundred and one yards; within there are many gardens. They are very high, and two may walk commodiously side by side. On the inside is a rail; there are towers from space to space, not very frequent, and I think not all

complete.' Mrs. Thrale supplements this note in a letter to Mr. Duppa in which she says, 'Of those ill-fated walls Dr. Johnson might have learned the extent from any one. He has since fairly put me out

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

The *Yacht* Inn

of countenance by saying, "I have known my mistress fifteen years, and never saw her fairly out of humour but on Chester Walls." It was because he would keep Miss Thrale beyond her hour of going to bed,

on the Walls, where for the want of light I apprehended some accident to her—perhaps to him!' In his *Diary of a Journey into North Wales in the year 1774*' the doctor mentions that he 'saw the cathedral which is not of the first rank, the castle (in one of the rooms the assizes are held), and the refectory of the old Abbey, of which part is a Grammar School. The master seemed glad to see me. The cloister is very solemn; over it are chambers in which the singing men live.' He mentions that he saw 'a subterranean arch, very strongly built,' which was perhaps one of the crypts, and gives a long account of the Hypocaust with which he seems to have been much taken.

Thomas Parnell, the poet, author of *The Hermit*, and other works much admired in their day, was archdeacon of Clogher and vicar of Finglas. On his way through Chester to Ireland, in 1717, he died, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church without any monumental record.

Dean Swift, as already mentioned, passed through Chester, probably more than once, on his way between England and Ireland. He does not seem to have formed a very high opinion of the inhabitants of the city, or indeed of any of the objects it contains, save perhaps the walls, to judge from the three epigrams written on windows at Chester, which are included amongst his miscellaneous pieces. As these doggrels are not of any great length they may be quoted here.

(i) The church and clergy here, no doubt,
Are very near akin;
Both weather-beaten are without,
And empty both within.

This seems to be a variant of the distich, already quoted, which popular tradition assigns to the Dean, and is perhaps the more correct version.

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

(ii) My landlord is civil,
But dear as the d—l:
Your pockets grow empty
With nothing to tempt ye:
The wine is so sour,
'Twill give you the scour:
The beer and the ale
Are mingled with stale;
The veal is such carrion,
A dog would be weary on.
All this I have felt,
For I live on a smelt.

(iii) The Walls of this town
Are full of renown,
And strangers delight to walk round 'em;
But as for the dwellers,
Both buyers and sellers,
For me, you may hang 'em or drown 'em.

John Wesley, a very different type of ecclesiastic from Swift, visited Chester on several occasions, holding his meetings apparently in a small house in Love Lane, where Wesleyan Methodism had its headquarters from 1750, the date of its foundation in Chester, until 1765, when a move was made to the Octagon Chapel. On one of his visits he says: 'We walked round the Walls of the City, which are something more than a mile and three-quarters in circumference. But there are many vacant spaces within the Walls—many gardens, and a good deal of pasture ground: so that I believe Newcastle-upon-Tyne,

The City of Chester

within the walls, contains at least a third more houses than Chester. The greatest convenience here is, what they call "The Rows"—that is, covered galleries which run through the main streets on each side, from east to west and from north to south; by which means one may walk both clean and dry in any weather, from one end of the city to the other.'

At first the people received him in a friendly way and he was satisfied with their treatment. 'Sat. (June) 20 (1752).—I rode to Chester, and preached at the accustomed place, a little without the Gates near St. John's Church. One single man, a poor alehouse keeper, seemed disgusted, spoke a harmless word, and ran away with all speed. All the rest behaved with the utmost seriousness, while I declared "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."' At a later date things took a different turn, and damage was done to property without any interference on the part of the authorities of the city. 'Friday, 3 (July). —I reached Chester. I was saying in the morning to Mr. Parker, "Considering the good which has been done already, I wonder the people of Chester are so quiet." He answered, "You must not expect they will be so always." Accordingly, one of the first things I heard, after I came into the town, was that for two nights before the mob had been employed in pulling down the house where I had preached. I asked, "Were there no Magistrates in the City?" Several answered me, "We went to the Mayor after the first riot, and desired a warrant to bring the rioters before him. But he positively refused to grant any, or to take any informations about it. So, being undisturbed, they assembled again the next night, and finished their work."' On the following

Sunday the Journal continues: 'I stood, at seven in the morning, near the ruins of the house, and explained the "principles and practice of that sect which is everywhere spoken against." I went afterwards to St. Martin's Church, which stands close to the place. The gentleman who officiated seemed to be extremely moved at several passages in the Second Lesson—Luke xvii. particularly,—"It is impossible but that offences should come, etc." He began his sermon nearly in these words—"The last Lord's Day, I preached on doing as you would be done to, in hopes of preventing such proceedings as are contrary to all justice, mercy, and humanity. As I could not do that, I have chosen these words for your present consideration, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." He concluded nearly thus: "I am sorry any such outrages should be committed, particularly in this parish where I have been teaching so many years. And to how little purpose! I will remove as soon as I possibly can from a place where I can do so little good. O what an account have they to make who have either occasioned or encouraged these proceedings! May God grant that they may repent in time! That they may know what spirit they are of! That they may, before it is too late, acknowledge and love the Truth as it is in Jesus."'

Some distinguished Cestrians and Visitors to the City

Wesley was in Chester again in 1786, in 1789, and in 1790. By this time, the occasion of his last visit, the congregation had moved to the Octagon Chapel. This visit is thus alluded to in the Diary: 'Mon. (April) 5 (1790).—In the evening I met once more with our old affectionate friends at Chester. I have

never seen this chapel more crowded than that night; but still it could not near contain the congregation.'

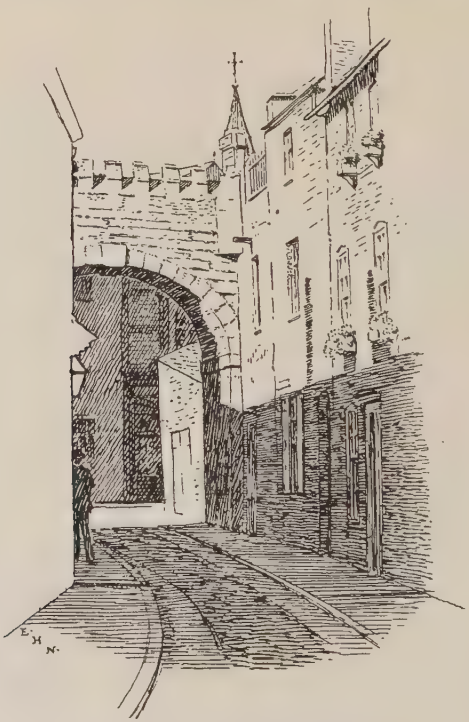
RIVER AND SUSPENSION BRIDGE

APPENDIX

ITINERARY

As stated in the preface this book is intended to be a short history of Chester, with descriptions of the various objects of historical interest in the city which illustrate that history. Hence the various things and places which visitors would naturally desire to see have not been given in the order in which they may be most easily and conveniently seen. It has consequently been thought that it might be well to give a route, or rather a series of routes, through the city, indicating the object of interest met with and the page of the book on which they will be found to be described. If we start from the station, which is at some little distance from the centre, and even from the walls of the city, we first make our way up a street called City Road, from which, at a point called the Bars, where a bar or gate at one time actually stood, we find our way into Foregate Street. 'Follow the trams' is a safe rule, for they will take the visitor from the station to the centre of the city and past it. In Foregate Street some old houses with projecting upper stories, carried on supports, will be seen, perhaps the best being one on the left-hand side, now used as a restaurant, and bearing the date 1577. Here also may be noted modern or comparatively modern houses built on the same plan. The city is entered by the East Gate, and the visitor will now have a

choice of ways to follow. Before describing the walk round the walls, the principal objects in the main and



NEW GATE OR PEPPER GATE

side streets within them may be enumerated. In Eastgate Street, The Rows (p. 234). At the end of Eastgate Street, the Cross is reached. St. Peter's Church (p. 198) is on the right. Here were originally the Pentice (p. 214) and the High Cross (p. 62). Going straight

on down Watergate Street, the objects to be noticed are: The Rows on both sides. On the left (i) Messrs. Quellyn, Roberts's crypt (p. 232); (ii) God's Providence House (p. 243); (iii) Bishop Lloyd's Palace (p. 243); (iv) The 'Yacht' (p. 246), and (v) The 'Old Custom-House' (p. 246). Then after passing the ends of Weaver Street and Nicholas Street, a narrow entry still on the left side will be reached, which leads into the court where is (vi) the Stanley Palace (p. 244). There is a notice-board to call the attention of visitors to this entry. At the end of the street is the Water Gate (p. 86). Returning to the Cross and turning up to Northgate Street, on the right Rows, on the left a colonnade under the last house of which, Vernon's toy-shop, are Roman remains (p. 22). Further on to the right the entrance to the Cathedral (p. 155), with the King's School (p. 155), and beyond this the Abbey Gate (p. 134) leading to the Precincts and Abbey Street (p. 173). Opposite to the entrance to the Cathedral are the Market and the Town Hall. At the end of the street is the North Gate (p. 173). Returning again to the Cross and turning down Bridge Street, the visitor will find a number of fine houses to interest him. On both sides are Rows. Then on the right is an old crypt under Messrs. Newman's place of business (p. 233), and Roman remains in the smoking-room of 'The Grotto' (p. 22). Opposite to these is the Roman Bath (p. 21). At the end of the street and also on the left-hand side is St. Michael's Church (p. 198). The direct continuation of the street is Lower Bridge Street, also containing many interesting houses. On the right is the 'Falcon,' an excellent example (p. 246). Lower down on the opposite side is a fine house with modern lower floor, bearing the deceptive date of 1003. This, of course, should be 1603, but the tail of the 6 has been omitted. Lower down on the right-hand side is Gamull Terrace, which contains all that remains of Gamull House (p. 244). Beyond this on the same side is the

'Old King Edgar,' an interesting house, and still further down and on the same side the 'Bear and Billet' (p. 245). At the bottom of the street is Bridge Gate (p. 87). Here the visitor may leave the enclosure of the walls and cross the Old Bridge (p. 88), noticing on his right the Mill (p. 91), and on his left the Causeway or Weir (p. 93). A short distance beyond the bridge on the opposite side of the Dee is Edgar's Field (p. 24), in which are the grotto (p. 24), and the figure of Minerva (p. 28). The eminence in this public park on which the bandstand is placed should be climbed for the sake of the view afforded, which embraces the river and bridge, the Castle, St. Mary's and St. John's Churches, and is quite one of the best points from which to view the city on this side. Only the turrets of the Cathedral tower will be seen above the roofs of the houses which intervene between it and the observer.

Returning to the end of Bridge Street, the visitor should walk a short distance down White Friars and notice a good bracketed black and white house of two gables, with the date 1658. Returning from White Friars, walk down Grosvenor Street, a new thoroughfare, in which on the right is the Grosvenor Museum. This the visitor will not fail to enter for the sake of seeing the Roman remains (p. 12) and the natural history objects mounted and displayed in the most admirable manner by the Curator, Mr. Newstead. Nearly opposite to this is the modern Franciscan Church (p. 182), and beyond this the graveyard of what was St. Bridget's Church (p. 200), containing a memorial obelisk, with portrait medallion, to Matthew Henry (p. 258). This is the site of Gloverstone (p. 116). Beyond this on the right are the Militia Barracks, and on the left the Castle (p. 101). Here is an equestrian statue of Lord Combermere. Beyond this the river is crossed by the Grosvenor Bridge (p. 86), a fine single-span arch, from which there is a good view of the Roodeye and the places near it.

The walk round the walls may best be started from the East Gate, and has already been described (p. 77). The following recapitulation may, however, be useful. Walking towards the north, that is, away from the side on which is situated the Grosvenor Hotel, the Cathedral and its graveyard are to be seen (p. 154). Then the Kale Yard Gate (p. 78) is crossed, with the Kale Yards (p. 78), or rather their site, on the right. Beyond this on the left is the Deanery Field, in which Roman tombs have been found, and near the angle of the wall is the Phœnix Tower (p. 79). Beyond this is the North Wall, in which so many Roman remains have been found. Looking over the parapet in various places the visitor will be able to see the footings of the ancient wall, quite a heap of stones being visible at one point (p. 79). Here also the deep cutting of the Roman Fosse, in which the canal runs, will be seen (p. 81), and just beyond the North Gate (p. 80) on the right are the Blue Coat School, the Bridge of Tears (p. 81), and the larger bridge over the canal. Beyond this are Morgan's Mount (p. 83), Pemberton's Parlour (p. 83), and on the left, the Barrow Field, in which interments were made at the time of the plague (p. 84). At this angle of the wall is Bonewaldesthorne's Tower (p. 84), beyond which is a curtain wall and the Water Tower (p. 84). This part of the wall has been much interfered with by a recent extension of the railway. Under the Water Tower is a small Public Park, in which are the supports of a Roman hypocaust. These are not *in situ*, but were removed here from their original position within the walls. Turning along the West Wall, the City Infirmary is passed on the left, and then Stanley Place (p. 180). Still further on, the wall skirts the Roodeye (p. 84), where will be seen the Grand Stand of the Racecourse, the Roman Quay (p. 75), part of which is enclosed with railings, and the stump of the old cross (p. 86). It was under the furthest gasometer that the pig of lead mentioned on p. 74 was found. On the

left is the site of the Nunnery (p. 179). Crossing Grosvenor Road the way leads past the Castle (p. 101), and by the river, Mill (p. 91), and old Bridge (p. 88). Past the Recorder's Steps (p. 95), the Wishing Steps (p. 96) are reached, and beyond these, Pepper Gate, at the end of Pepper Street (p. 96), is crossed. Between the steps and the last-named gate the Bishop's Palace and St. John's Church will be seen on the right. Beyond Pepper Gate on the right are the Cockpit (p. 230), and Thimbleby's Tower (p. 97), and a few yards further the circuit of the walls is completed. For the next route turn down St. John's Street, just outside the East Gate. On the left are the Post Office and Dickson's Seed Warehouse, in which is a portion of the Roman Wall (p. 21). At the end of the street turn to the left down Little St. John's Street to St. John's Church (p. 184). Leaving this turn down by the ruins, observing them and noting the coffin in the wall (p. 190), to the Groves, a pleasure-ground near the river. Here is the arch of the old Ship Gate (p. 87). The river is here crossed by a suspension bridge, which leads to the Queen's Park on the opposite side of the river. From this there is a good view of St. John's Church and the Hermitage rock, with the modern building which stands upon it (p. 191). Returning to the Chester side, enter the Grosvenor Park, in which are the entrance doors of Old St. Michael's Church and of the Nunnery (p. 179). Near the lodge of the park is St. Werburgh's Catholic Church, and the road past it leads to Foregate Street, near the Bars.

INDEX

ABBEY becomes 'mitred,' 129; and free from bishop's visitation, 130.
Abbey Gate, 134.
Abbey of St. Werburgh, 121.
Abbots:—
  Geoffrey, 125.
  Hugh Grylle, 126.
  John Birchenshaw, 131.
  Richard, 123.
  Richard de Seynesbury, 130.
  Simon de Albo Monasterio, 127.
  Simon Ripley, 130, 157.
  Thomas Clarke, 131.
  William de Bebyngton, 129.
Abbot's Court, the, 123, 133.
Aethelflaed makes a buhr at Chester, 30, 102.
Ale-houses, regulation of, 209.
Altars, Roman, 16.
'Ancient Britons, the,' 68.
Anchorites' cells near St. John's Church, 191.
Anselm, St., nominates first abbot of St. Werburgh's, 123.
Antefix, Roman, 19.
Archery-butts, 229.
Archery, compulsory, 211.
Arthur, Prince, at Chester, gives medal to Smiths' Company, 45.

BADGER-BAITING, 230.
Balls, 231.
Bangor Iscoed, monastery of, 28.
Barrow Field, 84.
Bateson, Thomas, composer, 149.
Bath, Roman, in Bridge Street, 21.
Battles:—
  Blore Heath, 43.
  Bosworth Field, 45.
  Chester (607), 28.
  Deorham, 28.
  Rowton Moor, 60.
  Shrewsbury, 41.
'Bear and Billet,' 246.
Bebyngton, William de, abbot, 129.
Beeston Castle, 59.
Bishops:—
  Bird, John, 144.
  Blomfield, 148.
  Bridgeman, 144.
  Cotys, 144.
  JacoBson, 149, 163.
  Pearson, 148, 158.
  Peploe, 148, 155.
  Peter, 140, 189.
  Scott, 144.
  Stubbs, 149.
  Sumner, 149.
  Wilkins, J., 146.
'Blue Posts Inn,' 51, 247.
Bonewaldesthorne's Tower, 84.
Bradshaw, Henry, 253.
Bradshaw, John, the regicide, 63, 254.
Brereton, Sir William, recruits for Parliamentarians, 57; attacks city, 58; besieges city, 60.
Bridges:—
  'Bridge of Death,' 81.

Grosvenor, 86.
Near North Gate, 81.
Old, 88.
Suspension, 280.
Bridge, or South Gate, 87.
Bull-baiting, 231.

CAERLEON-ON-USK, 7.
Cæsar's Tower, 105, 106.
Caldecott, Randolph, 255.
Canal, 81.
Cards sent to Ireland instead of commission, 50.
Castle, 101.
Castra Legionum, 5.
Cathedral, 153.
Catholics, measures against, 51, 52, 54.
Chapel in castle, 109.
Chapter-house of cathedral, 172.
Chequer-board in cathedral, 157.
Christmas ceremonies and festivities, 225.
Churches:—
St. Bridget's, 200.
St. Chad's, 199.
Holy Trinity, 198.
St. John Baptist, 184.
St. Martin's, 198.
St. Mary's on the Hill, 195.
St. Michael's, 198.
St. Nicholas's, 158.
St. Olave's, 199.
St. Oswald's, 158.
St. Peter's, 198.
St. Thomas à Becket, 199.
Cobham, Eleanor, 91.
Cock-pit and cock-fighting, 230.
Coins struck at Chester, 33.
Cole, Dean, abortive visit to Ireland, 50.
Colonnaded houses, 233.
Companies, trading, 215.
Consistory Court, 155.
Conventual buildings of St. Werburgh's Abbey as they formerly existed, 134; as they now are, 171.
Cromwell, Henry, 268.
Crosses pulled down, 51, 62.
Crypts, ancient, 231.
Cuitt, George, 256.
Curtein, sword, carried by Earl of Chester, 35.
Cyveilioc, Hugh, 37.

DENIS, Admiral Sir Peter, 256.
Deorham, battle of, 28.
De Quincey, T., at Chester, 192.
Derby, Earl of, trial and execution, 64.
Deva, 5; cosmopolitan population, 18.
Devereux, Walter, Earl of Essex, expedition to Ireland, 53.
Dublin, connection of Chester with, 112.

EARLDOM of Chester, its holders, 34; becomes an appanage of Prince of Wales, 39.
East Gate, 77.
Edgar's Field and Cave, 24, 87.
'Edgar's Tavern,' 247.
Edgar the Peaceable at Chester, 31.
Education, compulsory, in sixteenth century, 211.

FAIR on St. John Baptist's Day, struggle with citizens, 128.
'Falcon, the,' 247.
Featherstonehaugh, Sir T., trial and execution, 64.
Fenian attempt on castle, 68.
'Fifteen, the,' 67.
Filth of houses and streets, 212.
Fireplace in choir aisle of cathedral, 160.
Fire, provisions against, 210.
Fonts in cathedral, 156.
Food, provisions respecting sale of, 208, 209.
Forestalling, 207.
'Forty-Five, the,' 67.
Friaries:—
Carmelite, 181.
Dominican, 181.
Franciscan, ancient, 180; modern, 182.

GAMULL HOUSE, 245.

Gamull, Sir F., 60, 62, 196.
Gardens of Castle, 111.
Gates:—
East, 77.
Kale-Yard, 78.
North, 80.
Pepper or New, 96.
Ship, 87.
South or Bridge, 87.
Water, 86.
Gee, Henry, 209, 257.
Gerbod, Earl of Chester, 34.
Gild-Merchant, the, 203.
'Glove, the,' 215.
Gloverstone, 116.
'God's Providence House,' 244.
Grimaldi, 268.

HANDBRIDGE or Treboeth, 42, 87.
Harold, King, said to have been hermit at Chester, 31, 191.
Harrison, Thomas, 258.
Hawarden Castle during siege of Chester, 58.
Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, so-called tomb, 166.
Henry, Matthew, 66, 258, 278.
Higden, Ranulph, 260; tomb, 166.
High Cross, 62.
Holmes, Randle, the four, 261; memorial to, 195.
Horse-pool, the abbey, 136.
Hospitals:—
St. Giles, Boughton, 183.
St. John Baptist, 182.
Howden, Dean, 163.
Hughes, Thomas, 266.
Hugo Lupus, 34.
Hypocausts, 21.

INDEPENDENCE of Earls of Chester, 35; privileges of County Palatine withdrawn, 45.
'Ingagement' to serve the Commonwealth, 63.
Ireland, despatch of soldiers to, 53.
Iron-work in canon's vestry, cathedral, 161.

JEFFREYS, George, 266.
John, Earl of Chester, 39.
Johnson, Samuel, 268.
Jousting-croft, 229.

KALE-YARD Gate, 78.
King, Daniel, 266.
Kingsley, Charles, 267.

LADY Chapel in cathedral, 164.
Lawes, William, composer, 150.
Lead, pig found in Roodeye, 7, 74.
Lean Var, 4.
Legions at Deva, 8.
Leofric of Mercia endows abbey, 122.
'Lifting,' 227.
Lighting of city in sixteenth century, 213.
Lloyd's, Bishop, palace, 244.
Lokkes, Adam, robs stones from wall, 43.
'Lycidas' King, 248, 250.

MARSH, George, burnt at Chester, 49; tried in Lady Chapel, 165.
Mayor of Chester, 204.
Maypoles, 228.
Military character of Deva, 5.
Mill, 91.
Minerva, figure of, in Edgar's Field, 24, 87.
Mint at Chester, 33.
Misereres in cathedral, 169.
Monmouth, James, Duke of, at Chester, 64.
Morgan's Mount, 83.
Murengers, 76, 83.
Museum, Grosvenor, 278.
Mystery-Plays, 219.

NEOMAGUS, 3.
New Gate or Pepper Gate, 96.
North Gate, 80.
—— —— bridges, 81.
Nunnery, Benedictine, of St. Mary, 86, 179.

'OLD Custom House,' 247.
'Old King's Head,' 247.

Ormerod, George, 267.
Oswald, St., church, 158.

PARNELL, Thomas, 270.
Pemberton's Parlour, 83.
Pentice, the, 214.
Pepper Gate or New Gate, 96.
Phœnix Tower, 60, 79.
Pilkington, Francis, composer, 149.
Pillars, Roman, *in situ*, 22.
Pillories, 206.
Plague, the, 63, 212.
Portico of castle, erection of, 113.
Port of Chester, 52, 248.
Prisoners in castle, 112.
Protestation against the Covenant, the, 59.
Prynne passes through city, 56.
Puppet-show explosion and entry, 181.

QUARRY, Roman, 21, 75.

RACES, 228.
Ranulph Blundeville, 38, 182, 183, 203.
—— Gernons, 37, 179.
—— des Meschines, 36, 123.
'Recorder's Steps, the,' 95.
Refectory of abbey, 174.
Regrating, 207.
Reinallt ap Gryffyd ap Bleyddn, 44.
Richard, Earl of Chester, 36.
Ripley, Simon, abbot, 130.
Rogers, Archdeacon Robert, 267.
Roodeye, 84.
Royal visits to Chester :—
  Charles I., 57.
  Edward I., 40.
  James I., 55.
  James II., 65.
  Richard II., 40.
  William I., 33.
  William III., 66.
Rows, the, 234.
Rupert, Prince, at Chester, 59.

SADLER's Tower, 79.
St. John Baptist, church of, 184; ruins of east end, 190; oak coffin in wall, 191.
St. Mary's on the Hill, church of, 195.
Salmon in Dee, 93.
Saxon crosses, 33, 184.
See of Chester, ancient, 139; modern, 140; Henry VIII.'s scheme for, 141.
Sepulchral Banquet Tombstone, 15.
Sheriffs, 206.
Ship Gate, 87.
Shire Hall, old, 109; new, 114.
Shows on Midsummer Day, 218.
Siege of Chester, 57; Randle Holme on, 62.
Simon de Albo Monasterio, abbot, 127.
Simon de Montfort, 39, 127.
Stanley Palace, 245.
Swift, Dean, 247, 270.
Sword, Curtein, 35; of Chester, 36.

THOMAS of Canterbury, St., martyrdom on boss in Lady Chapel of cathedral, 164.
Tombstones, Roman :—
  In north wall, 11.
  In museum, 12.
  Sepulchral Banquet, 15.
Towers :—
  Bonewaldesthorne's, 84.
  Cæsar's, 105.
  Morgan's Mount, 83.
  Pemberton's Parlour, 83.
  Phœnix, 60, 79.
  Sadler's, 79.
  Thimbleby's, 97.
  Tyrer's, 88.
  Water, 84.
Trade, restrictions on, 210, 216.
Troutbeck Chapel in St. Mary's Church, 196.
Twenty-four, the, 204.
Tyrer's Water Tower, 88.

VALERIA Victrix : Legio, 8.
Vanbrugh, Sir John, 267.
Volunteers, charter, 67, 68.

WALLS :—
Description of, 71.
East, in Dickson's seed-shop, 21.
North, Roman remains in, 10.
Repairing of, 76.
Walk round, 77.
Watch, setting the Christmas, 226.
Water Gate, 86.
Water Tower, 84.
Webb, William, 267.
Weir, the, 93.
Wenlock, proposed union of Chester with, 140.
Welsh excluded from Chester, 42; contests with, 44.
Werburgh, St., 29; churches dedicated to her, 30; abbey of, 121; shrine, 164; legend of, 169.
Wesley, John, 271.
'Wishing Steps, the,' 96.
Woodwork in cathedral, 167.
Wulfhere, King of Mercia, 29.

YACHT-FIELD, 180.
'Yacht Inn,' 247.

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